00044794

BOMBAY BRANCH
OF THE
ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.
TOWN HALL, BOMBAY.

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 13 February, 2016

A LYTELL GESTE

OF ROBIN HODE

WITH OTHER ANCIENT & MODERN BALLADS AND SONGS RELATING TO THIS CELEBRATED YEOMAN

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED HIS HISTORY AND CHARACTER, GROUNDED UPON OTHER DOCUMENTS THAN THOSE MADE USE OF BY HIS FORMER BIOGRAPHER, "MISTER RITSON."

EDITED BY

JOHN MATHEW GUTCH, F.S.A.

AND ADORNED WITH CUTS BY

F. W. FAIRHOLT, F.S.A.

44794 a

MERRIE SHERWOOD,—VIVITE SYLVÆ.

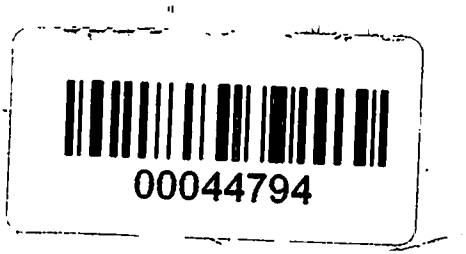
IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:

LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS.

M.DCCC.XLVII.

821.04
Gut/Lyt
44794



CONTENTS OF VOLUME I.

PAGE

PREFACE . . . . . .

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD 1

ROBIN HOOD, HIS STATION AND CHARACTER, NEWLY DISCLOSED 73

A LYTELL GESTE OF ROBIN HOOD 141

A NEW VERSION OF THE SAME, BY THE REV. JOHN EAGLES 222

APPENDIX.

DISSERTATION UPON THE MORRIS DANCE AND MAID MARIAN 301

DISSERTATION ON THE ANCIENT ENGLISH MORRIS DANCE, BY FRANCIS DOUCE, ESQ. . . . 329

THE LAMENT OF SIMON DE MONTFORT, WITH A TRANSLATION BY SIR WALTER SCOTT 366

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD FROM THE MANUSCRIPT IN THE SLOANEIAN COLLECTION IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM 379

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. I.

Vignette of Archery Implements at back of title-page

Frontispiece. Ancient Morris Dance, from an engraving on copper, by Israel Von Mechlen. Copied from Mr. Douce's "Illustrations of Shakspeare"

The Engraving at the head of the Preface is by that well-known and lamented artist Charles Stothard. It was given by him to his friend, Mr. George Cumberland, the author of "A Critical Catalogue of rare and valuable Prints. 4to. 1827"; and by Mr. Cumberland kindly lent to the Editor i

Tail-piece to Preface.—Representation of Robin Hood's Well, near Doncaster. 1720 xxxviii

Head-piece to Life of Robin Hood. Robin trimming his Bow . . . 1

Little John's Grave, as it now exists, at Hathersage, in Derbyshire . 10

Robin Hood and his two Companions, from the wood-cut in the first edition of the Garlands. 1686 29

Friar Tuck, from Mr. Tollett's Painted Glass Window . . 31

George à Green, Pindar of Wakefield, from his History. 12mo. 1706 . 39

Maid Marian, from Mr. Tollett's Painted Glass Window . . 43

Kirklees Abbey, Yorkshire, from the engraving in Stukeley's "Itinerarium Curiosum." C. the trees among which Robin Hood is said to have been buried 47

Robin Hood's Grave-stone, from Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments" . 50

Little John's House, as it at present exists, at Hathersage, Derbyshire . 70

The Major Oak, Sherwood Forest 73

Head-piece to the edition of the Lytell Geste in the Advocates' Library, Edinburgh 81

Tomb of Matilda, daughter of Lord Fitzwalter, at Dunmow . . 138

Head-piece to Fytte I of the Lytell Geste.—Robyn Hode and his Companions 145

Tail piece to Fytte I.—Saxon Huntsman. Cotton MS. Brit. Mus. Tiberius, B. 5 157

Head piece to Fytte II.—The Knight redeeming his Land, to the surprise of the Abbot of St. Mary's 158

Tail-piece.—Saxon Bow and Arrow. Cotton MS. Tiberius, C. vi. . 167

Head-piece to Fytte III.—Raynolde Grenelefe making Obeisance to the Sheriff 168

Tail-piece.—Norman Archers. Bayeux Tapestry . . . 177

Head-piece to Fytte IV.—Robin Hood pressing the Monk to take wine . 178

Tail-piece.—Archer of the 13th Century. Burney MS. . . . 189

Head-piece to Fytte V.—Robyn Hood after taking Little John on his back, while he rests, amuses himself with shooting 190

Tail-piece.—Ladies Hunting. 14th Century. Royal MS. 2. B 7 . 195

Head-piece to Fytte VI.—The Knight's Wife asking a Boon of Robin Hood 196

Tail-piece.—Practising with the Cross-bow. Royal MS. 2 B 7 . . 202

Head-piece to Fytte VII.—Robin Hood and Richard at the Le saluting the King 203

Tail-piece.—Archery. 14th Century. Royal MS. 2 B. 7 . . 212

Head-piece to Fytte VIII.—Robin Hood blowing his Horn to summon his Companions 213

Hunting Dresses. 15th Century. Harleian MS. 4431 . . 219

Woodland Scenery. Head and Tail Pieces to the Eight Fyttes of the Modern Version of the Lytell Geste . . . . 223 et seq.

Appendix. Maid Marian 301

Friar Tuck 321

Musical Air to the Morisco Dance 333

Morris Dance, from a tracing by Captain Grose . . . 355

African Lady dancing with Bells to her feet 359

Morris Dancer with handkerchiefs instead of bells 360

Morris Dancers from Holme's "Academy of Armory," 1683 . . 361

Wood-cut in the title-page of "Robin Hood's Garland," 1670 . . 363

PREFACE.

In the present endeavour to place the life and character of Robin Hood in a new and more favourable light, than that in which his early and scanty history is recorded by anonymous ballad writers and penny chap-book publishers, and more especially in an attempt to controvert the noble lineage which Mr. Ritson in his modern and more elaborate Life has ascribed to him, the Editor is aware that he has many popular prejudices and prepossessions to contend against in the credulity of the former class, and a minutely accurate and singularly pains-taking opponent in the latter gentleman. He would fain, therefore, shelter himself under the wing of Lord

Orford, who in his "Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of King Richard III," thus explains the difficulties of a writer who attempts to detect the generally received errors of his predecessors.

"Everything beyond that short period to which well-attested annals reach, is naturally obscure; and immense space is no doubt left for invention to occupy. Nations, as well as individuals, with a vanity inseparable from human nature, have filled that void with events calculated to display its own antiquity and lustre. But history, which ought to record truth and to teach wisdom, often sets out with retailing fictions and falsehoods."

If, on the one hand, the Editor has to elevate Robin Hood above the fictitious histories of the Martin Parkers, the Richard Johnsons, and the ballad-mongers of the sixteenth, and the Marshalls and the Newberys of Aldermanbury and Saint Paul's Churchyard, of the last century, he has also to lower him from the standard of Stukeley's and Ritson's elevation of him to the peerage, through a curiously concocted pedigree, as well as from the rank he holds in the dramas of Mundy and Chettle as Robert Earl of Huntingdon, the husband of the chaste Matilda, the Lord Fitzwater's daughter, afterwards transformed into Robin Hood's fair Maid Marian.

Dr. Stukeley, besides the pedigree he has inserted in his *Palæographia Britannica*, No. II, p. 115, says in a manuscript note of his copy of Robin Hood's Garland, afterwards in the possession of Mr. Douce, and by him bequeathed to the Bodleian Library, that

"Robin Hood took to this wild way of life in imitation of his grandfather Geoffery de Mandeville; who being a favourer of Maud, empress, K. Stephen took him prisoner at Saint Alban's, and made him give up the tower of London, Walden, Plessis, &c., upon which he lived on plunder."

On this attempt to throw some new light on the life and actions of this celebrated hero of English serfs, the poor and the obscure of the Anglo-Saxon race, it may also be asked, is there a single commendable inducement, in this period of civil refinement and settled laws, to make it worth the while of any person to bestow even an hour's research into the character of an individual who has been so long stigmatised as a free-booter or outlaw, or in other words an outcast from society, and to endeavour to refute the popular historical opinions almost universally entertained of him? The answers in the affirmative are manifold. Outlaw though he may have been pronounced, yet if proof can be established that he did not voluntarily and without provocation set at defiance the laws of his country, and commit those outrages upon his fellow-men which the term free-booter implies; and if there is cause to believe that he was led into such a course of life by a noble struggle for liberty and existence,—that his cotemporaries in a higher grade of society had set him the example, and held out to him the inducement to do so; and that therefore the crimes with which he is charged are not more deserving of the character of an outlaw, than were those of his superiors whom history designates merely as

tyrants; these reasons alone would, in the opinion of many, be a sufficient inducement to make the attempt. What says old Chaucer on this very comparison between a tyrant and an outlaw?—an author, be it remembered, who was writing, when it is likely there were individuals in existence in connexion with, or only one degree removed from connexion with, Robin Hood; and it is not improbable that he had this very outlaw in his eye at the time when he wrote as follows:

"Right so betwix a titleles tiraunt
And an outlawe, or elles a thefe errаunt,
The same I say, ther is no difference;
(To Alexander told was this sentence)
But, for the tyrant is of greter might
By force of meinie for to sle down right,
And brennen hous and home, and make all plain,
Lo, therefore is he cleped a capitain:
And, for the outlawe hath but small meinie,
And may not do so gret an harme as he,
Ne bring a contree to so gret meschiefe,
Men clepen him an outlawe or a thefe."

But the Editor would maintain, that he could be no common man who has reached the popularity of Robin Hood, and is therefore not unworthy the dignity of history. But if he were? In these days of matter of fact turmoil, it may be some relief to minds sick and weary of actual things to re-seek the woods and forests of more fabulous days.

"Flumina amem sylvasque inglorius."

Further; if evidence, derived from documents written by the same historians upon whose veracity other transactions in our annals of the same period are grounded, and have been received as authentic, has re-

cently been discovered, and from these documents a new light has sprung up, through which any stain in Robin Hood's character can be removed, is it wholly idle, or rather is it not praiseworthy, to rescue it from undeserved obloquy?

Nor are we, in these days of "established law," to reason from the sureties and influences of law, upon the general moral feeling against an age when no such security or belief in the maintenance of right existed; or, we may say at least was loosely held in the minds of the population. When a stranger is asked in Homer if he be a pirate, the question scarcely implies disgrace in the profession. "The profession of arms" had authority in its own hands, and, while it owned not imparted dignity, assumed one itself; and it was seldom called in question, when courage was the first of virtues.

Besides, even the struggles for political freedom have rendered the outlaw's habits more respectable in the eyes of nations, from the not unfrequent connexions and use made of them; and legitimate struggles have been branded with an ill name. It has happened that the want of success alone has constituted the treason.

In our times, the Calabrian banditti were in the pay of legitimate governments, and prided themselves on being "king Ferdinand's men." The guerilla warfare of Spain, in whatever direction the government may settle, will in after ages furnish many a romance of the "Bold Outlaws;" and Mina himself may be sung in ballads as a Robin Hood. It will be curious

to know how the Spanish ballad-makers will treat General De Lacy Evans and his men.

"It is the more incumbent on us for the honour of our country to do this," says an anonymous writer in one of our popular reviews, whose opinions in vindication of Robin Hood are about to be transferred to this volume, "inasmuch as whatever light has hitherto been thrown upon a subject assuredly national and popular, if ever subject were so, is chiefly due to a sagacious foreigner, M. Augustin Thierry, who, in his admirable 'Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands,' has made the nearest approximation that any modern writer has done to a just view of Robin Hood's historical character and popularity."*

The first French edition of M. Thierry's history was published in 1825, and appeared again in 1826. Without intending to detract from the able vindication it contains of Robin Hood's character, it is but just to remark that in Clarke's "Vestigia Anglicana," published in 1826, a similar line of argument is pursued, and several of the same authorities are referred to, as in M. Thierry. It is possible that Mr. Clarke may have read M. Thierry's history; but having observed the coincidence, it is due to the English historian to notice the occurrence.

Again,—if in this new biographical sketch of Robin Hood, the Editor had relied solely upon the numerous ballads relating to him, which naturally allude to the

* London and Westminster Review, No. 65, March 1840.

leading events of his life, much more might be verified from this source than any preceding biographer has attempted; especially from that early printed and semi-biographical legend of him, "A Lytell Geste of Robin Hode." The reprint of this tale, the only really ancient ballad in Ritson's collection, as well as the most poetical and natural of all relating to Robin Hood, which is intended in this edition to be accompanied with a modern version and notes, will elucidate more clearly than any other documents his station in society, his character, and actions. It will, indeed, it is hoped, do more. It will tend to corroborate an alteration in the period of birth usually assigned to him, and which, there can now be no doubt, took place at a later date than Mr. Ritson or any of his earlier biographers have fixed. More particularly will it disprove the popular opinion that he was of noble birth, and that his title was Earl of Huntingdon.*

If the department which the ballads and songs of

* "This ballad, one of the finest in the language, which for beauty and dramatic power is worthy of Chaucer himself, about whose time it was probably written, has shared Robin Hood's own fate; that is, enjoyed a great deal of undiscriminating and therefore worthless popularity. It has simply been looked on as one of the Robin Hood ballads; whilst, in fact, it surpasses all the others by its merits as by its antiquity, and its internal evidence of being written by one who understood that on which he wrote; which is much more than can be said for the ballad-doers of later centuries,—when Friar Tuck and Maid Marian first crept into the forester's company,—when the gallant yeoman was created without ceremony Earl of Huntingdon,—and his own period put back about a century, in order that he and the Lion Heart might hob and nob it together."—*Charles Knight's Old England.*

a nation fill is an inferior one, still the evidence of such documents comes in opportunely, where other evidence fails; and it is to be regretted, that the fastidiousness of taste has too often induced historians, in more cultivated ages, to overlook these rude but strongly characteristic monuments of the times that are gone by.

> "The songs to savage virtue dear,
> That won of yore the public ear,
> Ere polity sedate and sage
> Had quench'd the fire of feudal age."—*Warton.*

The legends of a rude people are, it has been justly remarked, when first produced, wild and strange like themselves; and, when preserved only by tradition, soon become extravagant and confused, furnishing but very insufficient data for establishing the certainty of political events. They afford, nevertheless, the only pictures that remain of the ages which gave rise to, and which preceded them. Our popular ballad poetry, part of which in point of antiquity may fairly be esteemed equal to many of our ancient monuments, has owed its preservation principally to oral tradition. But fragile and capricious as this tenure may seem, by which it has held its existence for centuries, and still continues to do so, it is not unworthy of remark, how well tradition serves as a substitute for more efficient and less mutable channels of communicating the occurrences of past ages to posterity.*

* Aubrey mentions that his nurse could repeat the History of England, from the Conquest down to the time of Charles I, in ballads.

Language, which in the written literature of a country is ever varying, suffers no material changes or corruptions among the lower and uneducated classes of society, by whom it is spoken as their mother-tongue. With these primitive forms of speech, peculiar idiomatic expressions and antique phrases are still in use, which we should look for in vain in the present day, or in its word-books, which are not professedly dedicated to the "Restoration of Decayed Intelligence."

A few remarks therefore on the traditionary intelligence which may still be gleaned respecting this Hero and his "merrie crew," cannot be considered inappropriate.

In allusion to Robin Hood and his companions, the author of *The Forester's Offering*,* Mr. Spencer T. Hall, a native of Sherwood Forest, and an enthusiast in relation to every scrap of history or tradition which can elucidate his character and the locality of his exploits, writes thus of him:

"Subsequent to the battle of Evesham, 1265, Robin Hood was the acknowledged commander of a regularly organized band of men astonishingly expert in archery, ordinarily about 100 strong, but capable of being increased *ad libitum* as occasion might require, because of his influence not only with the common people, but even with many of high degree, who were, doubtless from kindness to them in particular emergencies, very warmly attached to him. It is evident, that this acknowledged right to command,—which we never hear of any one disputing

* London: Whitaker and Co., 1841.

with him,—consisted more in the excellence of his intellect, his consummate policy, and the natural dignity of his character, than in the strength of his arm, or any personal love of distinction; since an instance which has given rise to several different stories,—some of them ridiculous exaggerations,—is related of his having adopted a stranger, who had manfully foiled him in combat, into his intimate service and friendship.* His more immediate establishment at this time consisted of a few tried and faithful companions. One of them, John the Naylor, who stood nearly seven feet high, was called, in jest, *Little* John, and was not less remarkable for his drollery than his prowess; another, the son of a miller, was called in contradistinction, by the same rule of logic, *Much*, or 'the Big-'un,' from being the smallest of the company; a third, *Scathelock*, it is said, from his skill in breaking the heads of his opponents in fight; fourth, Will Stately, or *Stoutly;* fifth, a chaplain, probably a renegade from some abbey, but not necessarily, as some have represented him, a licentious man; sixth, Allan o' the Dale, a minstrel, and a very gentle character, whose mind is said to have been injured by a cross in love; seventh, a female, ardently devoted to the chieftain, and a sharer of his rude fortunes from choice, whom he is always represented to have treated with the utmost delicacy, tenderness, and fidelity—carrying his affection for her memory so far as never to have adopted another after her death.

"If my reader," says Mr. Hall, "smile at the above names, and deem the history fictitious because they are used, I will at once refer him to any church-yard in the

* Might not Robin Hood purposely have suffered a defeat, in order to flatter his opponent, and induce him to join his company?

Forest, where he will find many similar on the gravestones, and probably inherited from some of Robin Hood's archers themselves. Nor am I alone in this opinion—it struck that graphic American writer, Washington Irving, most forcibly, when on a pilgrimage to Newstead Abbey. I have seen a public-house, in the very heart of the district, with the sign of *Robin Hood*, and kept by John *Little;* one of my earliest playfellows rejoiced in the name of Jonas *Archer;* the name of the parish-clerk of Kirkby, in Nottinghamshire, is *Shaklock;* and there are many others of the same name in that and the neighbouring village of Sutton; *Hardstaff* is the name of the late Squire Chaworth's huntsman, at Annesley Park: and *Beardall* is the name of an innkeeper at Hucknall Torkard; a Mr. *Bowman* (there's a name! a sturdy man must the original *bow-breaker* have been!) keeps a public-house at Nuncar Gate, near Kirkby Woodhouse; and similar names, identified with the locality, are as numerous as a parish jury list!"

In a private letter received by the editor from Mr. Hall, he writes:

"There is one tradition omitted in my *Forester's Offering*, upon which I have the fullest reliance. It is, that some years ago an old house was pulled down at Mansfield, and in its walls was discovered a sort of hiding-place, where the rotten remains of a bow, a green garment, a cap, and something beside, were found, and supposed from their appearance and locality to have belonged to one of Robin Hood's band. At the time I heard of it, it was unlikely I should ever have become an author, otherwise I might have taken down every particular.*

* *Vide* Ritson's Notes in his *Life of Robin Hood*, for the habiliments which he wore, &c. &c. p. 68.

"When I was between four and five years of age," Mr. Hall continues, "I lived with my uncle, an old farmer, and my grandmother, in an ancient farm-house in the Forest Lane, at Sutton, in Ashfield. At that time, we had a servant girl, who came from Olleston and Worksop, and she had a prime store of nursery songs, with which she used to amuse me; but there was one which pleased me more than all the rest, and I can remember it very correctly, as it excited in me a curiosity, to which all I have since written about Robin Hood is principally owing. Where she picked it up I know not; perhaps some one sung it to her as she did to me. It is thereabouts as follows:*

"'Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
Wends in the mickle wood;
Little John, Little John,
He to the town is gone.

Robin Hood, Robin Hood's
Telling his beads,
All in the mickle wood
Among the green weeds.

Little John, Little John,
If he comes no more;
Robin Hood, Robin Hood,
He will fret sore.'"

In a more recent publication of Mr. Hall's *Rambles in the Country surrounding the Forest of Sherwood,* on his visiting Hathersage,† the reputed burial-place

* This song, with some slight variations, is inserted in Mr. Halliwell's *Nursery Rhymes of England;* who adds, "It is well known at Worksop, in Derbyshire, where it constitutes one of the nursery series."

† Hathersage is situated in the midst of a mountainous tract near the eastern extremity of Hope Dale. The church is rather hand-

of Little John, he relates the following anecdote, and he has inserted, as a frontispiece, a sketch of the cottage in which, tradition says, Little John died:*

"The house is a rustic old place, with exceedingly thick walls, built without lime; it is now mantled with ivy, and shaded with umbrageons trees. In it lives Jenny Sherd, a respectable old widow—a very intelligent woman too, for one in her circumstances. I had a long conversation with Jenny Sherd, who was full of faith not only in Little John having died in her cottage, and in his being buried in the churchyard, but that the very grave still pointed out, with a little stone at each end, is the precise spot. I ventured to suggest to her, that the present sexton did not feel sure the grave pointed out was Little John's, though he did believe him buried somewhere in the churchyard; and that people more learned had doubted his interment there at all. 'Ah,' said Jenny, 'its very easy for one man to set his judgment up against a whole parish, who have all as good, and some of them a better chance of knowing than he—but some folk are so odd and perverse they'll hardly believe their own senses; and as to larned folks, why, mester, I'll tell you—it isna' larning that makes folks wise

some, and its spire is a conspicuous object from the different openings of the hills. The church-yard is the reputed burial-place of Little John, the companion of Robin Hood. Two ancient upright stones mark the spot where his remains reposed previous to their exhumation, several years ago.—*Knight's Journey-Book of Derbyshire.*

The Druidical remains at Arbor Low, the Router Rocks, Robin Hood's Stride, the masses of rocks bearing the names of Rod Tor, Bradley Tor, &c., are all within a short distance of Matlock, and are objects of attraction to the antiquary, the artist, and the lover of singular and picturesque scenery.—Grand Tor is also called Robin Hood's.—*Ibid.* p. 112.

* A wood-cut of this cottage is inserted elsewhere.

—it isna' education at a schule as always gies 'em sense. Books often rack folks brains out o' their heads—but they may be sometimes studied a long while afore they'll put ony in.' There was no arguing against such close rustic reasoning, so I asked the good old woman to tell me all she herself knew on the subject, which she proceeded to do in the clearest and straightest manner possible—no counsel could have stated the case more cogently. She said that she was now seventy years old (I should hardly have supposed her sixty), and that she was born in this cottage. Her father, William Bohem, who lived in it from his youth, died at the age of ninety-two, and he would now (1841), had he lived, have been one hundred and twelve years old. He received from his predecessors in the cottage, at the time he entered upon it, the assurance that Little John had died there; and *they* had received the same information sixty years before from those who had preceded them—and this was the way in which the tradition had been preserved from Little John's time, not only by the inhabitants of that house, but by almost every old family in the place. I suggested that it was a small house for a man like John the Nailor to be in; and in reply she assured me that within her own memory the interior consisted only of one large room, which was open to the rig-tree. She said I might see by the style of the cottage that it was many hundred years old; and there was a statement in the tradition that his body stretched nearly across the floor when he was dead. Her father, who, although an artizan, was a learned and intelligent man, having a good knowledge of the Latin and Greek languages, and being, withall, very scrupulous about crediting idle tales, had full faith in the whole tradition, believing that an entire parish could never have consented to a false-

hood on the subject; and especially as all well-informed people for many miles round gave their credence implicitly to the fact.

"Jenny well remembers Little John's grave being opened by order of Captain James Shuttleworth, and a great thigh-bone being brought directly from it into her cottage and measured, when it was found to be *thirty-two inches in length;* and though decayed a little at the ends, it was thick throughout in proportion to that length. Two shovels had been broken in digging the grave, and the bone had been broken near the middle by the third shovel striking it; but she says the parts exactly fitted each other, and is sure there was no artifice about it, notwithstanding what the present sexton (who, by-the-bye, never saw it) may say to the contrary. The name of the sexton who opened the grave was Philip Heaton, and the great bone was taken by Captain James Shuttleworth to the Hall; but his brother, Captain John, was so offended at him for having it exhumed, and he met with so many severe accidents—two of them in the church-yard—while it was in his possession, that at the end of a fortnight he had it re-interred in its old place. Some years after, however, being in garrison with his regiment at Montrose, in Scotland, he sent to her father proffering him a guinea if he would take it up again and send it to him in a box; but her father would not comply with any such request. However, about fifty years ago, a party of 'great folk' from Yorkshire had it re-exhumed and took it with them to Canon Hall, near Barnsley. Up to that time Little John's cap was kept hanging by a chain in the church; but even that the Goths just mentioned also took with them. Jenny remembers it all very well; and, with every other old person in the village, has a particularly distinct recollec-

tion of the green cloth cap that hung in the church, and which everybody 'knew' to be Little John's.

"The church itself is well calculated to interest the traveller—there is something more than common about its monuments and its history. In it lies an old English gentleman of the name of Eyre, one of whose ancestors, it is said, saved William the Conqueror's life on the field of Hastings, for which act the Conqueror, out of gratitude, robbed an old Saxon nobleman of extensive possessions in this neighbourhood, and *very generously gave* them to him. At one time seven manors within sight of each other belonged to seven members of this family—to which I may perhaps make some future allusion.

"A corpse was taken up in this place about sixty years since, quite white, and petrified as hard as flint. Jenny Sherd saw it reared *upright* in the church whilst the grave was preparing for its re-interment. It fell, however, along the aisle, when its head broke off. Her father tried to cut a piece out of its back with a saw, to preserve as a relic; but the saw could not make the slightest incision."

A few more remarks on the traditionary anecdotes relative to Robin Hood and his associates will appear as notes in the new piece of Biography. Mr. Ritson's life of him is so replete with scraps of songs and plays, proverbs, epigrams, and ancient customs, in which his name and memory occur; in truth, he has so completely ransacked every old author for an allusion to his hero, that it seemed almost impossible to add to his researches; but there are several fragments which have escaped even his notice, and which may not be inappropriate in filling up the extent of Robin Hood's undoubted popularity.

After this prefatory sketch of what is intended to be enlarged upon in regard to the Life and Character of Robin Hood, it may not be irrelevant to conclude with the reasons which induced the Editor to undertake this reprint, with several additions to the Ballads and Garlands, written at various periods, and founded upon the exploits of our Hero and his companions.

The Songs of every Nation must always be the most familiar as well as the most pleasing part of its poetry. They are uniformly the first fruits of the fancy and feeling of rude societies; and even in the most civilized times are the chief and favourite poetry of the great body of the people. Their influence, therefore, upon the character of a country has been universally felt and acknowledged.

"Among rude tribes," says a writer in one of our popular reviews,* "it is evident, that their songs must at first take their tone from the prevailing character of the people. But, even among them, it is to be observed, that, though generally expressive of the fiercest passions, they yet represent them with some tincture of generosity and feeling, and may be regarded as the first lessons and memorials of savage virtue. An Indian warrior, at the stake of torture, exults in wild numbers over the enemies who have fallen by his tomahawk, and rejoices in the anticipated vengeance of his tribe; but it is chiefly by giving expression to the loftiest sentiments of invincible courage and fortitude, that he seeks to support himself in the midst of his torments. 'I am brave and intrepid,' he exclaims; 'I do

* Edinburgh Review.

not fear death, nor any kind of torture! He who fears them is a coward—he is less than a woman—death is nothing to him who has courage!' As it is thus the very best parts of their actual character that are dwelt upon even in the barbarous songs of savages, these songs must contribute essentially to the progress of refinement, by fostering and cherishing every germ of good feeling that is successively developed during the advancement of society. When selfishness begins to give way to generosity; when mere animal courage is in some degree ennobled by feelings of patriotic self-devotion; and, above all, when sensual appetite begins to be purified into love; it is then that the popular songs, by acquiring a higher character themselves, come to produce a still more powerful re-action upon the character of the people. These songs, produced by the most highly gifted of the tribe, by those who feel most strongly, and express their feelings most happily, convey ideas of greater elevation and refinement, than are as yet familiar, but not so far removed from the ordinary habits of thinking as to be unintelligible. The hero, who devotes himself to death for the sake of his country, with a firmness as yet almost without example in the actual history of the race; and the lover, who follows his mistress through every danger, and perhaps dies for her sake; become objects on which every one delights to dwell, and models which the braver and nobler spirits are thus incited to emulate. The songs of rude nations, accordingly, and those in which they take the greatest pleasure, are filled with the most romantic instances of courage, fidelity, and generosity; and it cannot be supposed that such delightful and elevating pictures of human nature can be constantly before the eyes of any people, without producing a great effect on their character."

The same considerations are applicable to the effects of popular Ballads, upon the most numerous classes of society, even in civilized nations. They, like the inhabitants of rude countries, have little but their songs to carry their fancy or their feelings beyond the dull realities of life, and these strains thus occupy much of their attention, and have a proportionate effect upon their minds. They constitute, therefore, a powerful engine, either for good or evil. We can still remember their effect, at the beginning of the French Revolution, in working up the passions of the people to phrenzy and madness. While indulging in the most horrible excesses, they rent the air with the '*Ca ira*' or the '*Carmagnole*;' and there cannot be a doubt, that the bloody and ferocious strain of the songs that were put into their mouths, had no inconsiderable share in the most strange and sudden transformation in the character of a whole nation. A very opposite instance of the effect of song-writing, at the same period, is to be found in the works of Charles Dibdin, whose inimitable sea-songs have become, as it were, naturalized in the British navy. By seizing with exquisite skill the finest parts of what may be called the national character of our sailors; their courage, generosity, and simplicity of heart; and embodying them in songs, wonderfully adapted, both to their tastes and those of more refined auditors, he succeeded in impressing on their minds such an admirable *beau idéal* of a British seaman, that it became, in no small degree, their endeavour to attain a resemblance to it. Dibdin

was the Tyrtæus of modern times; and, like the Grecian bard, well deserved the gratitude of his country.

Among the early collections of the Historic Ballads of England, none were certainly more popular, or have continued so, than those which relate to Robin Hood. There are, it is true, no such spirit-stirring strains in them (*The Lytell Geste of Robin Hood* certainly claims exemption) as in the martial ballad of *The Percie and Douglas*, the more familiarly recognized song of *Chevy Chase*, which moved Sir Philip Sydney like the sound of a trumpet;* and to a criticism on which Addison devoted two numbers of the *Spectator*.† But as truly national songs, illustrative of the manners and exploits of popular characters of by-gone days, there is no doubt, that those on Robin Hood have exerted considerable influence over a large portion of the community, in the games‡ which have

* "I never heard the old song of *Percie and Douglas*, that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet; and yet it is sung but by some blinde crowder, with no rougher voice, than rude style; which being so well apparalled in the dust and cobweb of that uncivill age, what would it work, trimmed in the gorgeous eloquence of Pindarre!"—*Sir Philip Sydney's Defence of Poetry.*

† Nos. 70 and 74. "An ordinary Song or Ballad that is the delight of the people cannot fail to please all such readers as are not unqualified for the entertainment by their affectation or their ignorance; and the reason is plain; because the same paintings of nature which recommend it to the most ordinary reader, will appear beautiful to the most refined."—*Spectator*, No. 70.

‡ An account of the May Games, which there is no doubt originated, if they were not instituted, in commemoration of the exploits of Robin Hood and his companions, will form an article in the Appendix, with an illustrative engraving.

been instituted to his memory, in dramatic exhibitions, in sign-posts, and in innumerable rhymes, songs, and ballads, in commendation of him and his companions; and they retain to the present day a strong hold upon the public mind and memory.

These ballads, until the beginning of the last century, were printed in the old black letter type, and were originally vended by persons who were capable of singing them to some well-known tune, expressed at the beginning, or on the title-page, and who, in London at least, did not wander about the streets for that purpose; but they were sold in sheets by the penny chapmen* of those days. The error, as Anthony Munday calls it, of ballads becoming known in country towns, after they had been "abusively chanted"

* *Penny Chapmen.*—The term Chapman is now only used for a purchaser, one who makes bargains for purchase: but it anciently signified a seller also; being, properly, ceapman, market-man, or cope-man,—one who barters with another.—See *Nares's Gloss.*

The following passage from *The Pleasant and Stately Morale of the Three Lordes and Three Ladies of London*, 1590, will not be out of place:

"*Wea.* What wares do you sell?

"*Sim.* Truly, child, I sell Ballades—soft—whose wares are these that are up already? I paid rent for my standing, and other folkes wares shall be placed after mine; this is wise, indeed!

"*Wit.* O the fineness of the wares, man, deserve to have good place.

"*Sim.* They are fine, indeed; who sels them, can you tell? Is he free?

"*Wit.* Our maesters be; we wait on this ware, and yet we are no chapmen.

"*Sim.* Chapmen! no, that's true: for you are no men; neither chapmen, nor chipmen, nor shipmen: but if ye be chappers, choppers, or chippers, ye are but chap boyes and chap-boyes,—ye are double."
—Sig. B. 4.

in the streets of London, is noticed by Brathwaite: "Stale ballad-news, like stale fish, when it begins to smell of the panyer, are not for queasie stomacks. You must therefore imagine, that, by this time, they are cashiered the citie, and must now ride poast for the countrie, where they are no less admired than a gyant in a pageant; till at last they grow so common there too, as every poor milk-maid can chant and chirpe it under her cow, which she useth as a harmlesse charme to make her let down her milke."*

The constant reprints of *Robin Hood's Garland*, with the brief life of the celebrated hero attached, are evident marks of their still existing popularity. One of the latest writings of that lover of ballad literature, Allan Cunningham, was an article, which recently appeared in *Knight's Store of Knowledge*, entitled *Robin Hood's Ballads.*

"These ballads, graphic as they are," says Mr. Cunningham, "will by some be pronounced rude. We must admit, too, that they are often inharmonious and deficient in that sequence of sound, which critics in these our latter days desire; but the eye, in the times when they were composed, was not called, as now, to the judgment seat; and the ear—for music accompanied, without overpowering, the words—was satisfied with anything like similarity of sound. The ballad-master was, therefore, little solicitous about the flow of his words, the harmony of balanced quantities, or the clink of his rhymes. His compositions, delighting as they did our ancestors, sound rough and harsh in the educated ear of our own times; for our taste is

* Character of a Ballad-monger, in *Whimzies, or a New Cast of Characters*, 12mo, 1631, sig. B, 4 rev. (Note to *Kind Heart's Dream*, Percy Society's Publications, No. XIV. p. 68.)

delicate in matters of smoothness and melody. They are, however, full of incident and human character; they reflect the manners and feelings of remote times; they delineate much that the painter has not touched, and the historian forgotten; they express, without acrimony, a sense of public injury, or of private wrong: nay, they sometimes venture into the regions of fancy, and give pictures in the spirit of romance. A hearty relish for fighting, was fun; a scorn of all that is skulking and cowardly; a love of whatever is free, and manly, and warm-hearted; a hatred of all oppressors, clerical and lay; and a sympathy for those who loved a merry joke, either practical or spoken, distinguished the *Ballads of Robin Hood.* The personal character, as well as the history of the bold outlaw, is stamped on every verse."

Sir John Hawkins, also, in alluding to *Robin Hood's Garland,* in his *History of Music,* makes the following remarks:

"Who was the author of this collection of songs, entitled *Robin Hood's Garland,* no one has yet pretended to guess. As some of the songs have in them more of the spirit of poetry than others, it is probable that it is the work of various hands; that it has from time to time been varied, and adapted to the phrase of the times, is certain.

"The songs above mentioned, although many of them are devoid of historical truth, being, in short, metrical legends, were yet interesting enough to engage the attention of the people; for either the subject was of some dignity, or the catastrophe affecting, or the poetry was level to the common apprehension: in short, they fell in with the popular humour; and in this way only can we account for their transmission through a succession of ages, and

their existence at the present time. Too contemptuously, therefore, does the author of *The Art of English Poetry* speak of our ancient songs and ballads, when, comparing them to those grave and stately metres which he takes occasion to commend, he calls them small and popular musicks, sung by those Cantabanqui, upon benches and barrel-heads, where they have none other audience but those boys or country fellows that pass by them in the streets, or else by blind harpers, or such like taverne-minstrelles, that give a fit of mirth for a groat; and their matters being for the most part stories of old time, as the *Tale of Sir Topas*, the *Reportes of Bevis of Southompton*, and *Clymme of the Clough*, and such other old romances, or historical rimes, made purposely for the recreation of the common people at Christmasse diners and bridals, and in tavernes and alehouses, and such other places of base resort; also, they be used in carols and rounds, and such light or lascivious poems, which are commonly more immediately uttered by these buffons or vices in playes, than by any other persons."

Two of the most popular of our modern Romance writers, Sir Walter Scott and Mr. James, have also each of them interwoven the exploits of Robin Hood and his companions into their respective tales of *Ivanhoe* and *Forest Days*. The former in his dedicatory epistle says, "I cannot but think it strange that no attempt has been made to obtain an interest for the traditions and manners of Old England, similar to that which has been excited in behalf of those of our poorer and less celebrated neighbours. The Kendal green, though its state is more ancient, ought surely to be as dear to our feelings as the variegated

tartans of the North. The name of Robin Hood, if duly conjured with, should raise a spirit as soon as that of Rob Roy; and the patriots of England deserve no less their renown in our modern circles, than the Bruces and Wallaces of Caledonia."

Between the characters of Robin Hood and that of Rob Roy, in Sir Walter Scott's celebrated novel, a strong similarity has been remarked by many writers. And to a certain extent the remark is accurate. The individuals, or outlaws, as they are commonly called, who, without rank or fortune (for that Robin Hood was Earl of Huntingdon or descended from a noble family will be shewn to be mere fiction) could for thirty or forty years set all laws at defiance; and who, though obnoxious to the sovereign or the government, not merely as breaking its laws, but as rebels and traitors, and at deadly feud with the great men on whose property they lived, could resist all their power, elude all their stratagems, without being ever overwhelmed by superior force, or betrayed by the treachery of companions (taken as many of them were from the least trustworthy of society), must have been men of extraordinary talents; and, although branded with great vices, yet possessed of many virtues. They must have been the first, in order to play their own parts well; the second, in order to retain the fidelity of their associates.

In this age of antiquarian research, several Legends, Ballads, or Songs, have been discovered since Mr. Ritson published his Collection, in two volumes, in 1795, prefaced with a Life of Robin Hood; and in

regard to their hero, recent criticism and enquiry have likewise shewn, that the particulars of his "birth, parentage, and education," generally received as genuine, are many of them founded in fiction, and that a nearer approach to his true history may now be made.

Mr. Ritson's attempt to perpetuate the belief that Robin Hood was of noble birth, a descendant from Robert Earl of Huntingdon, or Huntington, as Mr. Ritson writes; and the authenticity of the pedigree, which he quoted from Dr. Stukeley's *Palæographia Britannica* (No. II. p. 115) in support thereof, were the subject of controversy immediately after his *Life of Robin Hood* appeared.* Upon this Life, it cannot be denied that Mr. Ritson exerted his accustomed diligence, in collecting every passage from every book he could find, whether MS. or printed, in which his hero is mentioned. Nor did his sneers at the Christian's belief of miracles, and at the Christian priesthood, so insidiously interwoven into the Life, in his foolish endeavour to exalt the character of Robin Hood beyond those qualities of bravery, generosity, and faithfulness, which his adherents and admirers might fairly be allowed to ascribe to him, escape the indignant reprehension of the critics of that day.

For the foregoing reasons, and many others which might easily be adduced, it may not unreasonably be presumed, that the public taste in regard to Robin

* *Vide* Articles in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, by Mr. Gough, Mr. Pegge, &c. &c.; one of which is given at length as a note in the editor's abridgement of Ritson's *Life of Robin Hood.*

Hood, and the Ballads relating to him, is not yet satiated: but that readers may still be found, who feel an interest in his character, and who may be gratified with the perusal of a more complete work than has yet appeared.

Another inducement to undertake the present publication, arose from the following circumstances:

From one of that celebrated Bibliopolist, Mr. Thomas Thorpe's Catalogues, always replete with rare manuscripts and books, the editor purchased the following article with others, in the hand-writing of Peck, the Historian of Stamford, editor of the *Desiderata Curiosa*, &c. &c.; another of which was part of Peck's MS. of his edition of Milton, hereafter noticed.

"No. 1122.—ROBIN HOOD.—A collection of songs relating to the exploits of this famous outlaw and his merry companions, with notes, shewing the variations and illustrations of the local terms used, entirely in the neat autograph of F. Peck, the Stamford historian."

Having given this manuscript a cursory perusal, it was placed upon the same shelf with Percy, Ritson, and other collectors of Ballads relative to the same personage; where it remained until the recent establishment in London of "the Percy Society," of which the editor had become a member. From the nature of the publications issued by this society, he was induced to re-peruse the manuscript, in the hope that he might find its contents worthy of its notice, recollecting there were some ballads in it, which were

neither in Percy's *Reliques*, nor in Ritson's *Robin Hood*. Much of the matter was submitted to some members of the Council of the Percy Society, who informed the editor it was approved, as a desirable addition to their publications. Circumstances have since occurred, particularly the length to which the volumes will extend, the expense of the wood-cuts, &c., which have induced the editor to make it a distinct publication, and to take the responsibility and risk upon himself. The manuscript was found to be sadly imperfect; but it was evident that Mr. Peck had made the collection with a view to a new and enlarged edition of *Robin Hood's Garland*. There is no title to the manuscript; but it will presently be seen that Mr. Peck compiled it in 1735. Mr. Peck died July 9, 1743. The manuscript, therefore, is prior to the publication of Dr. Percy's *Reliques*, in which are several relating to Robin Hood, with critical remarks upon them; the first edition of the *Reliques* bearing date 1765. The manuscript, also, was written earlier than Mr. Ritson's publication, which appeared in 1795. It commences with the following "Verses," which vary in most of the editions of the *Garlands* which the editor has seen, in relation to the number of ballads which they contain. The "verses" are usually addressed "To all Gentlemen Archers." Mr. Peck entitles them "Preliminaries"; and it will be seen, that the number of ballads, which in no *printed* edition exceed twenty-seven, were, in Mr. Peck's collection, intended to amount to three-score.

"PRELIMINARIES.

"To all Gentlemen Archers.

1.

"These Ballads have been long out of repair;
Four; sixteen; twenty-four,* songs, all th' account:†
Yet now at last,‡ by due industrious care,
The twenty-four to full three score amount;
Which large additions needs must please, we know,
All th' ingenious Yeomen of the Bow.

2.

"To read how Robin Whood, and Little Jahn,§
Scarlet, Stukeley, Midge, Clifton, bold and free,
With other Outlaws, bravely play'd the Man,
When they did reign beneath the greenwood tree.
Priests parted with their gold t' increase their store,
But never would they rob or wrong the poor."

The manuscript, after this leaf on which the "Preliminaries" is written, jumps at once to Song or Ballad 50, which is one contained in Ritson (Song 19, vol. ii.) and in the common editions of the *Garlands*; the title, *Little John and the Beggars*. It differs very materially from Ritson's, who professes to have taken his from a black-letter copy in Anthony Wood's collection.‖ It is preceded by an "argu-

* *Vide* Ritson, second edition, preface, p. 98.

† The first edition of these Ballads, and several others after it (as I take it), consisted only of four songs; from four, they afterwards got up to sixteen; from sixteen to twenty-four.—*Note by Mr. Peck.*

‡ Anno MDCCXXXV.—*Ibid.*

§ Jahn, for John, Yorkshire.—*Ibid.*

‖ In the present edition will be found three different versions of a Ballad with this title. This by Mr. Peck; that published by Mr. Ritson, and one from a Garland in the Bodleian Library, totally different from these, and extended into two parts.

ment" on the contents of the song; as are all the others, with numerous notes by Mr. Peck. What were the subjects of the preceding forty-nine ballads which Mr. Peck had collected, it is impossible to ascertain, unless the missing leaves in the MS. in the editor's possession should ever come to light. The title and subject of 47, 48, and 49, are however incidentally alluded to in what Mr. Peck styles "the editor's conclusion," "opening," as he says, "a most curious piece of secret history, couched in Songs 47, 48, 49, under the disguised names of Robin *Whood* and Saladin the Saracen." This conclusion will be given entire.

Upon shewing this manuscript to Mr. Rimbault, (not only the indefatigable secretary of the Percy Society, but a diligent and accurate purveyor to it of some of the most curious pieces it has published), he urged the editor to make further investigation into the origin and contents of the Garlands, and to endeavour to recover the missing leaves of the manuscript. From Mr. Thorpe, the editor has been unable to ascertain from whose possession the document came into his hands; nor have the various enquiries made after the missing leaves in other quarters brought them to light. But the editor has been led into further research, and to the perusal of numerous collections of ballads, in which he has found some ancient ones relative to Robin Hood, which are not in Ritson, as well as some modern ones scattered in several publications, not unworthy to be brought into a collected form.

Six of the ballads in the MS. do not appear, from any remarks of Mr. Peck, to have been selected by him from any written or printed collection. On the contrary, it seems highly probable, from the various interlineations he has made, that they are imitations by himself of the ballad style, and that he had altered and adapted those which had been published in the Garlands to his own taste and fancy. In the account of Mr. Peck in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, (vol. i. p. 507 et seq.) enumerating not only his printed works, but many which he had prepared for the press, he appears to have been the writer of several occasional poems, and of one upon a sacred subject,—"Saul and Jonathan." The following specimen of his poetry, which forms the conclusion of his preface to the second volume of the *Desiderata Curiosa*, shews the versatility of his style, as well as his fondness for antiquarian lore.

"I shall conclude this preface," he says, "with the following lines upon the picture of time, as expressed in my title-page:

"YEARS are the TEETH of Time, which softly eat,
And wear out curious books in manuscript.
FIRE is his SCYTHE, wherewith he downe doth mow,
Ten thousand pretious volumes at a blow.
Blest printing best of all his rage withstands,
And often chains his feet, and ties his hands.
Rescued from whom here various authors meet,
And all united form a splendid treat.
So num'rous flowers in one rich nosegay joyn,
And still more fragrant smell and brighter shine.

"Scribebam die meo *lustrico*,
"IV Id. Maii. MDCCXXXV."

That Mr. Peck did not confine himself to imitations of ballads, but attempted to palm off works of a higher kind of poetical composition as the labour of others, is discovered in a singular species of forgery, it may be called, not inferior to that of Lauder, or of Chatterton and Ireland of a more recent date. The editor here alludes to "The BAPTISTES, a sacred dramatic Poem, as written in Latin by Mr. GEORGE BUCHANAN, translated into English by Mr. JOHN MILTON, and first published in 1641 *by order of the House of Commons.* London, printed 1740." (Vide Peck's Milton, 4to.)

Upon the announcement of this poem, and Mr. Peck ascribing the translation of it to Milton, bishop Warburton at once detected the imposition, and sent the following caustic remarks in a letter to Dr. Birch, which will be found in Nichols's *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. v. p. 645:

"Peck's advertisement has been an inexhaustible fund of mirth in this place [Newark]; and I don't doubt but our good friend Mr. Ray has had his share of it. He seems to have had a design of confirming what I said of the poem, that it was his own, when he says that, being his own property, he will give the reasons that induced him to pitch upon Milton for the author; which implies, that being his own property, he had a right to give it to whom he pleased, and he pitched upon Milton as the man most in his favour, whilst he was writing blank verse. But his joining Herod the Great to it, which is undoubtedly his own, ascertains the property; a poem as well as a man being to be known by his company. On which I will venture to pronounce condemnation in due form of

law ; *that it shall return from whence it came.* From a dunghill, he says, he received it, and to a dunghill it shall go, let him print upon as stiff paper as he pleases. In this case I am as clear and positive as the famous Etymologist,* who said he not only knew from whence words came, but whither they were going."

It only remains to add a few lines on what is intended to constitute this edition of Robin Hood.

In regard to his Biography, in addition to what has incidently been related in this preface, in order that a proper judgment may be formed between Mr. Ritson's account of him, and that which will be extracted from the article in the *London and Wesmtinster Review,* before alluded to, there will be inserted,—

1. An abridgement of Mr. Ritson's *Life of Robin Hood,* and of his long notes.

2. Extracts from M. Thierry's History, and an abridgement of the article in the above-named Review.

3. The *Legend of the Lytell Geste.*

4. A reprint of the MS. *Life of Robin Hood* in the British Museum (Bibl. Sloane, 715), recently published by Mr. Thoms, in his *Collection of Romances,* will be inserted in an Appendix, with other documents.

These articles, it is considered, will render the transactions in the life of Robin Hood more complete than they have yet appeared, and exhibit his charac-

---

* Dr. Bentley.

ter in a far more estimable light than that in which it has hitherto been generally held.

These materials will form the first volume.

Several manuscript and black-letter fragments of legendary poetry recently discovered;—the ballads and songs in Mr. Ritson's collection;—those in the various editions of the *Garlands* which have fallen under the editor's notice, together with a selection of ballads from Mr. Peck's MS., and some of more modern date, not hitherto brought into any collection, will constitute the second volume.

As the distant residence of the Editor has precluded him from having constant and ready access to those delightful storehouses of ancient and modern literature, the British Museum, the Bodleian, Ashmolean, and Pepysian collections, and to the several collegiate libraries in Oxford and Cambridge, he has been obliged, in many instances, to content himself with references to a small library of his own; availing himself of transient visits to Oxford, the place of his birth (where from his venerable parent* he imbibed a love for literature), and of occasional references, through his friends, to libraries elsewhere:—labouring under these disadvantages, he is conscious that numerous errors and deficiencies will be discovered by critical eyes in the following pages, for which he

* The Rev. John Gutch, M.A., many years Registrar of the University, editor of the *Collectanea Curiosa*, 2 vols. 8vo, 1781; and of Anthony Wood's *History and Antiquities of the University of Oxford*, 5 vols. 4to, 1786, &c.

must crave the indulgence of more learned and fortunate delvers in ballad lore.

There can be no apology necessary for concluding these prefatory remarks with the following appropriate ballad, which forms the prologue to an 8vo. volume, published in 1825, entitled "London in the Olden Time; or Tales to illustrate the Manners and Superstitions of the Inhabitants, from the Twelfth to the Sixteenth Century." By an anonymous writer:

"The Olden Time.

"The olden time! aye, the olden time!
Tho' wild the fable, though rude the rhyme,
Oh! dear is a tale of the olden time.
Those times of marvel and mystery,
Those times we never again may see;—
When life was a wild and gorgeous dream,
A meteor glancing with fitful beam;
When the Knight prick'd forth with his lance in rest,
To far distant lands at his ladye's behest;
When the Templar rush'd to the Holy Land;
When the Troubabour wander'd with harp in hand;
When the rosy Garland of gay Provence
Wreath'd bloomingly round the warrior's lance;
When the Outlaw dwelt 'neath the green-wood tree,
Chasing the red deer merrily;
And England's yeomen battled stour
On the fields of Cressy and Azincour.

"The olden time! aye, the olden time!
Though harsh the diction, tho' quaint the rhyme,
Oh! dear's the romaunt of the olden time!

For all was then bright, and strange, and new ;
And nought was certain, yet all seem'd true ;
And truth was fable, and fiction drest
Her witching phantoms in truth's own vest :
The goblin bestrode the midnight blast ;
The shrouded ghost thro' the cloister past ;
And forms of beauty surpassingly fair
Spread their gossamer wings on the viewless air ;
And spirits from heaven and angels bright
Rose with dazzling sheen on the hermit's sight ;
And faery maids bore the brave knight away
To live in joyaunce and youth for aye.

" Yes, dear are the fables of olden time !
So sweetly witching, so rudely sublime
Are the strange, wild marvels of olden time.
For the sage would his mighty tome unfold,
While heroes, and sages, and monarchs of old,
And forms of unearthly beauty would pass,
Beaming in light o'er his charmed glass ;
And his was the power that unlock'd the store
Of knowledge and might, which the Magi of yore
Had snatch'd from the demons ; and his the skill
With pure gold, from rude dross, his alembic to fill ;
While the chalice of immortality
Gleam'd enticingly fair to his gifted eye ;
While earth and ocean, and heaven and hell,
Lay open before the mighty spell,
And the stars in their course kept watch sublime ;—
Oh ! high were the visions of olden time !

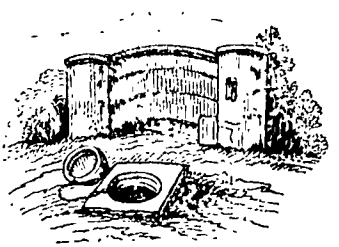
" But all hath pass'd,—and the half-eras'd stone,
The ivy-wreath'd column nodding alone,

The oriel window's rich tracery,
The cloister's delicate imagery,
The pointless lance, and the rusted sword,
The crumbling parchment's cherish'd hoard
Of awful signs, rich with mystery
Of cabala, or deep alchemy,—
And the missal with fadeless colours still bright,
Or the time-worn scutcheon of once-fam'd knight,
Or the rude minstrel's half-lost rhyme,
Is all to us of the olden time ;
Save those visions so witching, so wild, and high,
That rise when we muse upon days gone by.

" And therefore, most dear art thou to me,
Old Troynouvant ; for I ne'er can see
Thine ancient bridge, nor thy mystic stone,
Nor list the mellow and silvery tone
Of the bells of St. Mary Overy;
Nor that history-teeming structure see,
Thine age-bleach'd tower, nor thy civic hall,
Nor the ruin'd fragments of thy wall,
Nor thy Templar's time-worn effigies,—
But pageants of elder days round me rise.
Romance resumeth her whilom reign ;
Thine age-past glories beam bright again ;
And the pride and pomp of chivalry
In vanishing beauty fleet swiftly by.

" And as the minstrel in slumber bound,
Listed sweet music stealing around,
Awaking, essay'd to catch that strain
Of unearthly sweetness, but all in vain ;
Yet, still with weak hands the chords would try,
Of that magic and heaven-born melody ;

Thus, so sweet, but so matchless, to me appears
Thy faerie-bright vision of long-past years;
And thus, though all skilless, with powers too scant,
Would I trace thy fleet shadows, old Troynouvant,
And shew thee, as witching, as vividly bright,
As thou risest at times to my eager sight.
Alas! alas! I may never braid
A garland well worthy to crown thy head:
Yet, tho' scant and tho' rude the offering be,
The best that I may would I bring to thee."



THE

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD,

ABRIDGED FROM THAT BY MR. RITSON,

WITH NOTES BY HIM AND THE
PRESENT EDITOR.

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD.

BEFORE making use of the authorities upon which a new account of the Parentage, date of Birth, and Character of ROBIN HOOD is intended to be grounded, and to which reference has been made in the Editor's Preface, a brief notice of the sources of information possessed by his former biographers cannot be irrelevant, if not absolutely necessary, to remove in the present day old prepossessions and prejudices.

For this purpose an Abridgement of his Life by Mr. Ritson, and of the copious Notes which accompany it, is of importance; allusion being made therein, particularly in the Notes, to almost every circum-

stance that had then been written or published by him relative to the Hero and his companions, even to allusions to his name.

"It will scarcely be expected," says Mr. RITSON, in the commencement of this LIFE, "that any one should be able to offer an authentic narrative of the life and transactions of this extraordinary personage. The times in which he lived, the mode of life he adopted, and the silence or loss of contemporary writers, are circumstances sufficiently favourable, indeed, to romance, but altogether inimical to historical truth. (*Note* A.) The reader must, therefore, be contented with such a detail, however scanty or imperfect, as a zealous pursuit of the subject enables one to give; and which, though it may fail to satisfy, may possibly serve to amuse.

"No assistance has been derived from the labours of his professed biographers (B); and even the industrious Sir John Hawkins, from whom the public might have expected ample gratification upon the subject, acknowledges that 'the history of this popular hero is but little known, and all the scattered fragments concerning him, could they be brought together, would fall far short of satisfying such an enquirer as none but real and authenticated facts will content.' 'We must,' he says, 'take his story as we find it.' He accordingly gives us nothing but two or three trite and trivial extracts, with which every one at all curious about the subject was as well acquainted as himself (C). It is not, at the same time, pretended that the present attempt promises more than to bring together the scattered fragments to which the learned historian alludes. This, however, has been done, according to the

best of the compiler's information and abilities; and the result is, with a due sense of the deficiency of both, submitted to the reader's candour.

"ROBIN HOOD," Mr. Ritson then proceeds to assert, "was born at Locksley, in the county of Nottingham (D), in the reign of king Henry II, and about the year of Christ 1160 (E). His extraction was noble, and his true name ROBERT FITZOOTH, which vulgar pronunciation easily corrupted into ROBIN HOOD (F.) He is frequently styled, and commonly reputed to have been, EARL OF HUNTINGDON; a title to which, in the latter part of his life, at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension (G). In his youth he is reported to have been of a wild and extravagant disposition; insomuch that, his inheritance being consumed or forfeited by his excesses, and his person outlawed for debt, either from necessity or choice he sought an asylum in the woods and forests, with which, immense tracts, especially in the northern parts of the kingdom, were at that time covered (H). Of these he chiefly affected Barnsdale in Yorkshire, Sherwood in Nottinghamshire, and, according to some, Plompton-park, in Cumberland (I). Here he either found, or was afterwards joined by, a number of persons in similar circumstances:

> 'Such as the fury of ungoverned youth
> Thrust from the company of awful men;'

who appear to have considered and obeyed him as their chief or leader, and of whom his principal favourites, or those in whose courage and fidelity he most confided, were, LITTLE JOHN (whose surname is said to have been *Nailor*), WILLIAM SCADLOCK (Scathelock or Scarlet), GEORGE A GREEN, pinder (or, pound-keeper) of Wakefield, MUCH, a miller's son, and a certain monk or friar

named Tuck (J.) He is likewise said to have been accompanied in his retreat by a female of whom he was enamoured, and whose real or adopted name was Marian (K).

"His company, in process of time, consisted of a hundred archers; men, says Major, most skilful in battle, whom four times that number of the boldest fellows durst not attack. His manner of recruiting was somewhat singular; for, in the words of an old writer (L), 'whersoever he heard of any that were of unusual strength and 'hardines,' he would desgyse himself, and rather than fayle, go lyke a begger to become acquaynted with them; and, after he had tryed them with fyghting, never give them over tyl he had used means to drawe [them] to lyve after his fashion,' a practice of which numerous instances are recorded in the more common and popular songs, where, indeed, he seldom fails to receive a sound beating. In shooting with the long bow, which they chiefly practised, 'they excelled all the men of the land; though, as occasion required, they had also other weapons.'

"In these forests, and with this company, he for many years reigned like an independent sovereign; at perpetual war, indeed, with the king of England, and all his subjects, with an exception, however, of the poor and needy, and such as were 'desolate and oppressed,' or stood in need of his protection. When molested, by a superior force, in one place, he retired to another, still defying the power of what was called law and government, and making his enemies pay dearly, as well for their open attacks, as for their clandestine treachery. It is not, at the same time, to be concluded that he must, in this opposition, have been guilty of manifest treason or rebellion; as he most certainly can be justly charged with neither. An outlaw, in

those times, being deprived of protection, owed no allegiance: 'his hand was against every man, and every man's hand against him.' These forests, in short, were his territories; those who accompanied and adhered to him, his subjects:

'The world was not his friend, nor the world's law:'

and what better title King Richard could pretend to the territory and people of England than Robin Hood had to the dominion of Barnsdale or Sherwood, is a question humbly submitted to the consideration of the political philosopher.

"The deer with which the royal forests then abounded (every Norman tyrant being, like Nimrod, 'a mighty hunter before the Lord'), would afford our hero and his companions an ample supply of food throughout the year; and of fuel, for dressing their venison, or for the other purposes of life, they could evidently be in no want. The rest of their necessaries would be easily procured, partly by taking what they had occasion for from the wealthy passenger, who traversed or approached their territories, and partly by commerce with the neighbouring villages or great towns.

"It may be readily imagined that such a life, during great part of the year at least, and while it continued free from the alarms and apprehensions to which our foresters, one would suppose, must have been too frequently subject, might be sufficiently pleasant and desirable, and even deserve the compliment which is paid to it by Shakspeare, in his comedy of *As You Like It* (act i. scene 1), where, on Oliver's asking, 'Where will the old duke live?' Charles answers, 'They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they

live like the OLD ROBIN HOOD OF ENGLAND; and fleet the time carelessly as they did in the golden world.' Their gallant chief, indeed, may be presumed to have frequently exclaimed with the banished Valentine, in another play of the same author (*Two Gentlemen of Verona*):

> 'How use doth breed a habit in a man!
> This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
> I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
> Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
> And to the nightingale's complaining notes
> Tune my distresses, and record my woes.'

Their mode of life, in short, and domestic economy, of which no authentic particulars have been even traditionally preserved, are more easily to be guessed at than described. They have, nevertheless, been elegantly sketched by the animating pencil of an excellent, though neglected, poet.

[Mr. Ritson here quotes a well-known passage of upwards of fifty lines from Drayton's *Polyolbion*, song xxvi., relative to Robin Hood's mode of life in conjunction with his companions; the particulars of which Drayton had no doubt collected from the popular songs and legends of the day; commencing with

> "The merry pranks he play'd, would ask an age to tell,
> And the adventures strange that Robin Hood befell," &c.]

"That our hero and his companions, while they lived in the woods, had recourse to robbery for their better support, is neither to be concealed nor to be denied. Testimonies to this purpose, indeed, would be equally endless and unnecessary. Fordun, in the fourteenth century, calls him, '*ille famosissimus siccarius*,'* that most celebrated robber;

* "Famosus" is of *evil* report; *celebrated* robber is therefore bad translation; and "sicarius" is *cutthroat*.

and Major terms him and Little John, '*famatissimi latrones.*' But it is to be remembered, according to the confession of the latter historian, that, in these exertions of power, he took away the goods of rich men only, never killing any person, unless he was attacked or resisted; that he would not suffer a woman to be maltreated; nor ever took any thing from the poor, but charitably fed them with the wealth he drew from the abbots. 'I disapprove,' says he, 'of the rapine of the man; but he was the most humane, and the prince of all robbers.' In allusion, no doubt, to this irregular and predatory course of life, he has had the honour to be compared to the illustrious Wallace, the champion and deliverer of his country; and that, it is not a little remarkable, in the latter's own time (M).

[Mr. Ritson then, in allusion to the aversion which Robin Hood is popularly recorded to have entertained against bishops, abbots, priests, and monks, cannot resist the temptation to indulge in his well known derision of Christianity; and having quoted from Fordun a very extraordinary escape of Robin Hood, which that writer attributes to his perseverance in hearing mass, &c.; Mr. R. thus descants upon it: "They who deride the miracles of Moses or Mahomet, are at full liberty no doubt to reject those wrought in favour of Robin Hood." This indecent and unnecessary sneer against the Christian belief in miracles, for Mahomet never pretended to work any, adds one more to the innumerable proofs of how restless and uneasy a sensation is the disbelief of religious truth. As there are similar reflections also levelled at magistrates and other respectable members of the community, this part of the life may well be passed over;] which Mr. R. thus concludes:

"Having, for a long series of years, maintained a sort

of independent sovereignty, and set kings, judges, and magistrates at defiance, a proclamation was published (N), offering a considerable reward for bringing him in either dead or alive; which, however, seems to have been productive of no greater success than former attempts for that purpose. At length, the infirmities of old age increasing upon him (O), and desirous to be relieved, in a fit of sickness, by being let blood, he applied for that purpose to the prioress of Kirkleys nunnery in Yorkshire, his relation (women, particularly religious women, being in those times somewhat better skilled in surgery than the sex is at present), by whom he was treacherously suffered to bleed to death. This event happened on the 18th of November 1247, being the thirty-first year of King Henry III, and (if the date assigned to his birth be correct) about the eighty-seventh of his age. He was interred under some trees at a short distance from the house; a stone being placed over his grave, with an inscription to his memory (P).

"Such was the end of Robin Hood; a man, who, in a barbarous age, and under a complicated tyranny, displayed a spirit of freedom and independence which has endeared him to the common people, whose cause he maintained (for all opposition to tyranny is the cause of the people), and, in spite of the malicious endeavours of pitiful monks, by whom history was consecrated to the crimes and follies of titled ruffians and sainted idiots, to suppress all record of his patriotic exertions and virtuous acts, will render his name immortal.

'Dum juga montis aper, fluvios dum piscis amabit,
Dumque thymo pascentur apes, dum rore cicadæ,
Semper honos, nomenque tuum, laudesque manebunt.'

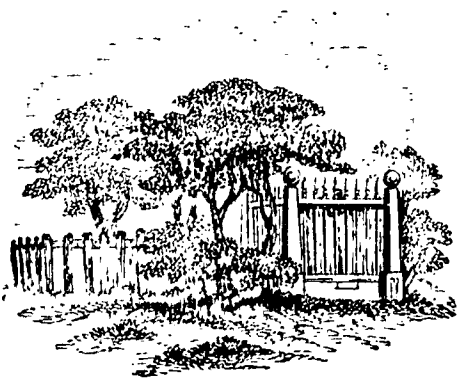
"With respect to his personal character, it is sufficiently

evident that he was active, brave, prudent, patient; possessed of uncommon bodily strength, and considerable military skill; just, generous, benevolent, faithful, and beloved or revered by his followers or adherents for his excellent and amiable qualities. Fordun, a priest, extols his piety; Major (as we have seen) pronounces him the most humane and the prince of all robbers; and Camden, whose testimony is of some weight, calls him, '*prædonem mitissimum*,' the gentlest of thieves.* As proofs of his universal and singular popularity: his story and exploits have been made the subject as well of various dramatic exhibitions (R) as of innumerable poems, rhymes, songs, and ballads (S): he has given rise to divers proverbs (T); and to swear by him, or some of his companions, appears to have been a usual practice (U): his songs have been chanted on the most solemn occasions; his service sometimes preferred to the word of God (V): he may be regarded as the patron of archery; and, though not actually canonized (a situation to which the miracles wrought in his favour, as well in his lifetime as after his death, and the supernatural powers he is, in some parts, supposed to have possessed, give him an indisputable claim), he obtained the principal distinction of sainthood, in having a festival allotted to him, and solemn games instituted in honour of his memory, which were celebrated till the latter end of the sixteenth century (W); not by the populace only, but by kings or princes and grave magistrates, and that as

* The prince of all robbers is undoubtedly Robin Hood. "But Robin," says Sir Walter Scott, "will still remain 'the gentlest of thieves.' He acted upon a larger scale, or in opposition to a larger injustice, to a whole political system. He 'shook the superflux to the poor, and shewed the heavens more just.'"—*Gilbert of the White Hand, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, vol. i. p. 21.

well in Scotland as in England; being considered, in the former century, of the highest political importance, and essential to the civil and religious liberties of the people, the efforts of government to suppress them frequently producing tumult and insurrection: his bow, and one of his arrows, his chair, his cap, and one of his slippers, were preserved with peculiar veneration, till within the present century; and not only places which afforded him security or amusement, but even the well at which he quenched his thirst, still retain his name,—a name which, in the middle of the present century, was conferred as an honourable distinction upon the prime minister of the king of Madagascar. (x)

"After his death, his company was dispersed (y). History is silent in particulars; all that we can, therefore, learn is, that the honour of Little John's death and burial is contended for by rival nations (z): that his grave continued long 'celebrious for the yielding of excellent whetstones;' and that some of his descendants, of the name of *Naylor*, which he himself bore, and they from him, were in being so late as the last century."



NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING LIFE BY MR. RITSON,

WITH SOME BY THE EDITOR.

(A) In Sir Walter Scott's Prose Works, vol. vi. *Essay on Romance*, p. 160, is the following paragraph, which more accurately defines the distinction between romance and historical truth, than that here drawn by Mr. Ritson:

"The progress of romance keeps pace with that of society, which cannot long exist, even in the simplest state, without exhibiting some specimens of this attractive style of composition. It is not meant by this assertion, that in early ages such narratives were invented, as in modern times, in the character of mere fiction, devised to beguile the leisure of those who have time enough to read and attend to them. On the contrary, romance and real history have the same common origin. It is the aim of the former to maintain as long as possible the mask of veracity; and, indeed, the traditional memorials of all earlier ages partake in such a varied and doubtful degree of the qualities essential to those opposite lines of composition, that they form a mixed class between them, and may be termed either Romantic Histories, or Historical Romances, according to the proportion in which the truth is debased by fiction, or their fiction mingled with truth."—*Editor.*

(B) "Former biographers, &c."] Such, that is, as have already appeared in print, since a sort of manuscript life in the Sloane Library, will appear to have been of some

service.* The first of these respectable personages is the author, or rather compiler of "The noble Birth and gallant Atchievements of that remarkable Outlaw Robin Hood; together with a true account of the many merry extravagant exploits he played; in twelve several stories; newly collected by an ingenious antiquary. London, printed by W. O." [William Onley] 4to. black letter, no date. These "several stories," in fact, are only so many of the songs in the common *Garland* transposed; and the "ingenious antiquary," who strung them together, has known so little of his trade, that he sets out with informing us of his hero's banishment by King Henry the *Eighth*. The above is supposed to be the "small merry book," called *Robin Hood*, mentioned in a list of "books, ballads, and histories, printed for and sold by William Thackeray, at the Angel in Duck-lane" (about 1680), preserved in one of the volumes of old ballads (part of Bagford's collection) in the British Museum.

Another piece of biography, from which much will not be expected, is "The lives and heroick atchievements of the renowned Robin Hood and *James Hind*, two noted robbers and highwaymen. London, 1752," 8vo. This, however, is probably nothing more than an extract from Johnson's *Lives of the Highwaymen*, in which, as a specimen of the author's historical authenticity, we have the life and actions of that noted robber, Sir John Falstaff.

The principal, if not sole, reason why our hero is never once mentioned by Matthew Paris, Benedictus Abbas, or in any other ancient English history, was most probably his avowed enmity to churchmen; and history, in former

* This Life, as before mentioned, will be inserted entire in the appendix to this volume.

times, was written by none but monks. From the same motives that Josephus is pretended to have suppressed all mention of Jesus Christ, they were unwilling to praise the actions which they durst neither misrepresent nor deny. Fordun and Major, however, being foreigners, have not been deterred by this professional spirit from rendering homage to his virtues.—*Ritson.*

(c) Mr. Ritson does not here do justice to the notice of Robin Hood in Sir John Hawkins's *History of Music.* He devotes many pages to the subject; the note in the preface, p. xxiii, is a specimen of his illustrations, and of the entertaining manner in which he treats the subject.—*Ed.*

(d) "—— was born at Locksley in the county of Nottingham."] "Robin Hood," says a MS. in the British Museum (*Bib. Sloane,* 715), written, as it seems, towards the end of the sixteenth century, "was borne at Lockesley, in Yorkshyre, or, after others, in Nottinghamshire." The writer here labours under manifest ignorance and confusion, but *the first row of the rubric* will set him right:

> 'In Locksley town, in merry Nottinghamshire,
> In merry sweet Locksly town,
> There bold Robin Hood was born and was bred,
> Bold Robin of famous renown.'

Dr. Fuller (*Worthies of England,* 1662, p. 320) is doubtful as to the place of his nativity. Speaking of the "Memorable Persons" of Nottinghamshire, "Robert Hood," says he, "(if not by *birth*) by his chief *abode* this country-man."

The name of such a town as *Locksley,* or *Loxley* (for so we sometimes find it spelt), in the county of Nottingham or of York, does not, it must be confessed, occur either in Sir Henry Spelman's *Villare Anglicum,* in Adams's *Index*

Villaris, in Whatley's *England's Gazetteer*,* in Thoroton's *History of Nottinghamshire*, or in the *Nomina Villarum Eboracensium* (York, 1768, 8vo.) The silence of these authorities is not, however, to be regarded as a conclusive proof that such a place never existed. The names of towns and villages of which no trace is now to be found but in ancient writings, would fill a volume.—*Ritson.*

A Worcestershire antiquary, while these volumes were preparing for the press, has startled the editor by claiming Loxley in Staffordshire, or Loxley in Warwickshire, as the birthplace of Robin Hood; the forest of Feckenham in Worcestershire as the early scene of his exploits; and that it was not till after the battle of Evesham that "he removed to Sherwood forest in Nottinghamshire, and to Barnsdale forest in Yorkshire."

The tract in which these discoveries appear is entitled "On the Jovial Hunter of Bromsgrove, Horne the Hunter, and Robin Hood, by JABEZ ALLIES, Esq. F.S.A." London, 1845.

To this gentleman the editor acknowledges himself indebted for the first intimation he has met with, that there are localities in Worcestershire evidently called after Robin Hood's name, and not mentioned by Mr. Ritson in his numerous allusions to every vestige in print or otherwise, in which, in his keen researches, he found it retained.

But the author of the tract, in the opinion of the present editor, is rather too credulous, when he attempts to show not only that the Jovial Hunter of Bromsgrove, and Horne the Hunter in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, were the same personages, but that Robin Hood was so also.

The antiquary shall, however, speak for himself; and

* All three mention a Loxley in Warwickshire, and another in Staffordshire, "near Needwood Forest, the manor and seat of the Kinardsleys."—*Ritson.*

let public opinion be pronounced upon the probability of his conjectures:

"Another question is, whether that mysterious personage called the Devil's Huntsman, or Harry-ca-nab, was not the Jovial Hunter? And who was this Harry-ca-nab? Now there is a field called Robin Hood's Oak in the parish of Chaddesley Corbett, and a field called Robin's Acre in the parish of Grimley, and fields called Robin's Piece, Big Robins, and Little Robins, in the parish of Tardebigg; and it is possible, therefore, that Robin Hood, the hero of the forests, may, under the nickname of Harry-ca-nab, have been the Jovial Hunter. It is pretty clear that he was at the battle of Evesham, temp. Henry III, anno 1265; and his character, as handed down by tradition, very much corresponds with that of the Jovial Hunter.

"This is a very interesting view of the subject; and although it may be considered as standing upon slender ground, yet the following may be brought in some support of it:—

"Dr. Nash, in vol. i. of his History of Worcestershire (Introd. p. 68), says: 'Among the forest rolls remaining in the closet of the old Chapter House of Westminster Abbey (where the King's Bench and Common Pleas records are now kept, anno 1778), is one entitled on the back, 'Rot. de foresta de Pyperode in com. Wigorn, temp. R. Johan.' Which forest seems to have contained within its bounds part of Chaddesley Corbett, Bel Broughton, Bromsgrove, Alvechurch, &c. Some woods in Chaddesley still retain the name of Peppyr Woods. In the Inquisitio post mortem Rogeri Bishopsden, 18 R. II, he is said to have held at his death the office of bailiff of the forest of Feckeney, et Pyperode intra forestam de Feckenham. By this it

should seem that Pyperode Forest was only a member of the large forest of Feckenham.' Other parts of the North of Worcestershire were included in Kynvare (Kinver) Forest; such as part of Pedmore, Hagley, Old Swinford, Chaddesley, Kidderminster, Wolverley, and Churchill."

"The boundaries of Feckenham Forest were much enlarged by Henry II, to the very great distress of the inhabitants; in fact, the greatest portion of the north and north-east part of Worcestershire was included in it. The following, among many other places, were added to it by Henry, namely, part of Droitwich, of Hanbury, of Rushock, of Hartlebury, of Chaddesley Corbett, of Forfield, of Cofton, of Alvechurch, of Tardebigg (including the hamlet of Redditch), of Harvington, of Evesham, of Fladbury, of Abberton, of Crowle, of Bredicot, and of Spetchley.

"Here, then, we have proof that the field called Robin's Acre, in Grimley, was situated near to the forests, and that the piece called Robin Hood's Oak, in Chaddesley Corbett, and Robin's Piece, Big Robins, and Little Robins, in Tardebigg, lay in the midst of the forests; and consequently, it is very probable, that Robin Hood sometimes ranged in those parts, either to chase the wild animals of the district, or to avenge the grievous wrongs that his countrymen were enduring, especially under the odious forest laws; and therefore that the oak and places in question were named from him either in his lifetime or shortly after his death."

Then follow these Addenda :—

"It has been contended by some writers that Robin Hood was born at a place called Locksley, or Loxley, which is said to have been either in Yorkshire or Notting-

hamshire; but we have no evidence of any such place in either of those counties. (See Smith's *Standard Library*, 'Robin Hood,' pages 4 & 5.) There is a township called Loxley in the parish of Uttoxeter, in Staffordshire, and a parish called Loxley, situated near to Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire; and the question is, whether the latter place, which lay near to Feckenham Forest, was not the birth-place of our hero; and if so, it is probable that after the battle of Evesham he removed to Sherwood Forest, in Nottinghamshire, and to Barnsdale Forest, in Yorkshire. This appears, in some measure, to be corroborated by the following extract from page 5 of the above-mentioned work, namely: 'Dr. Fuller (*Worthies of England*, 1662, page 320) is doubtful as to the place of his nativity. Speaking of the 'Memorable Persons' of Nottinghamshire, 'Robert Hood,' says he, '(if not by *birth*) by his chief *abode* this country-man.'"

"Edward I, in or soon after the twenty-eighth year of his reign, 1299 (perhaps out of compunction for all the blood which he had shed at the battle of Evesham, &c. in his father's reign), disafforested all the before-mentioned lands, which his grandfather, Henry II, had so tyrannically wrested from the people and added to Feckenham Forest. (See Nash, vol. i. Introduction, pp. 65 and 66.) And as this took place only about thirty-five years after the battle of Evesham, it is not unlikely that Robin Hood was either then living or had not long been dead; and, in some proof of it, that very interesting legendary poem, entitled 'A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode,' (and which is probably the oldest and most authentic that we have upon the subject), describes a great many of his exploits as having taken place during a long course of years in Edward's reign."

Also in a letter addressed to the editor of a Worcester newspaper, who had raised a doubt upon Mr. Allies' conjectures, he writes thus:

"Before I conclude, I must observe that it is pretty clear, from the evidence I have collected relative to Robin Hood, that he was not contemporary with Richard I, as is generally supposed, but with Henry III and Edward I; and, if *I may add another conjecture* to those contained in the addenda to my treatise, I would say *it is possible* that either Robin Hood's FATHER or GRANDFATHER might (like thousands of others) have been most tyrannically dispossessed of land by Henry II, when he enlarged Feckenham Forest; and if so, this in a measure would account for Robin's decided hostility to the forest laws." (*Editor.*)

(E) —"in the reign of King Henry II, and about the year of Christ 1160."] "Robin Hood," according to the Sloane MS. was born.....in the dayes of Henry II, about the year 1160." This was the sixth year of that monarch; at whose death anno 1189) he would, of course, be about twenty-nine years of age. Those writers are therefore pretty correct who represent him as *playing his pranks* (Dr. Fuller's phrase) in the reign of King Richard I, and, according to the last named author, "about the year of our Lord 1200." Thus Major (who is followed by Stowe, *Annales* 1592, p. 227): "Circa hæc tempora [sic *Ricardi I*] ut auguror, &c." A manuscript note in the Museum (*Bib. Har.* 1233) not, in Mr. Wanley's opinion, to be relied on, places him in the same period, "*Temp.* Rich. I." Nor is Fordun altogether out of his reckoning in bringing him down to the time of Henry III,* as we shall hereafter see; and

* It is singular that Mr. Ritson, with his usual acuteness, did not with this clue pursue the light which Fordun throws upon the period

with him agrees that "noble clerke Maister Hector Boece," who, in the nineteenth chapter of his "threttene buke," says, "about this tyme was that waithman Robert Hode with his fallow litil Johne, &c." (*History of Scotland*, Edin. 1641, fo.) A modern writer (*History of Whitby*, by Lionel Charlton, York, 1779, 4to.), though of no authority in this point, has done well enough to speak of him as living "in the days of abbot Richard, and Peter his successor;" that is, between the years 1176 and 1211.—*Ritson.* [The date of Robin Hood's birth will be more fully discussed in another place.—*Editor.*]

(F) "His extraction was noble, and his true name ROBERT FITZOOTH."] In "an olde and auncient pamphlet," which Grafton the chronicler had seen, it was written that "This man discended of a noble parentage." The Sloane MS. says, "He was of ..... parentage;" and though the material word is illegible, the sense evidently requires *noble.* So, likewise, the Harleian note: "It is said that he was of noble blood." Leland has also expressly termed him "*nobilis.*" (*Collectanea*, i. 54.) The following account of his family will be found sufficiently particular: Ralph Fitzothes or Fitzooth, a Norman, who had come over to England with William Rufus, married Maud or Matilda, daughter of Gilbert de Gaunt earl of Kyme and Lindsey, by whom he had two sons: Philip, afterwards earl of Kyme, that earldom being part of his mother's dowry, and William. Philip, the elder, died without issue; William was a ward to Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford, in whose household he received his education, and

in which Robin Hood will certainly appear to have lived, according to the arguments and proofs hereafter to be adduced from M. Thierry and the anonymous writer in the *London and Westminster Review.*—*Editor.*

who, by the king's express command, gave him in marriage to his own niece, the youngest of the three daughters of the celebrated lady Roisia de Vere, daughter of Aubrey de Vere, earl of Guisnes in Normandy, and lord high chamberlain of England under Henry I, and of Adeliza, daughter to Richard de Clare, earl of Clarence and Hertford, by Payn de Beauchamp, baron of Bedford, her second husband. The offspring of this marriage was our hero, ROBERT FITZOOTH, commonly called ROBIN HOOD. (See Stukeley's *Palæographia Britannica*, No. I. *passim.*)

Warner also, in *Albion's England*, 1602, p. 132, refers his existence to "better daies, first Richard's daies." This, to be sure, would not be sufficient to decide the point; but neither judge nor counsel will dispute the authority of that oracle of the law Sir Edward Coke, who pronounces that "Robert Hood lived in the reign of King Richard I."—3 *Institutes*, 197.

A writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March 1792, under the signature of D. H.* pretends that *Hood* is only a corruption of "o'th'wood, q. d. of *Sherwood.*" This, to be sure, is an absurd conceit; but if the name were a matter of conjecture, it might be probably enough referred to some *particular* sort of *hood* our hero wore by way of distinction or disguise. See Scott's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, 1584, p. 512.—*Ritson.*

(G) "He is frequently styled EARL OF HUNTINGDON, a title to which, for the latter part of his life at least, he actually appears to have had some sort of pretension."—*Ritson.*

* The writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under the signature of D. H., is well known to have been Mr. Gough, against whom Mr. Ritson spared no opportunity of exercising his splenetic temper.—*Editor.*

In this note Mr. Ritson again quotes Grafton, Warner, and some other writers, who ascribe the title of Earl of Huntingdon to Robin Hood. Mr. R. also gives at full length his pedigree from Stukeley's *Palæographia Britannica*. Having transcribed from Mr. Douce's copy of *Robin Hood*, formerly Stukeley's, the following abridgement of the pedigree in the doctor's hand-writing, nothing else is necessary to be extracted from this long note.

"Guy Earl of Warwick.

George Gamwell of Gamwell Hall *magna* Esq. — Joanna = Fitz Odoth

Robin Fitz Odoth

Gamwell, the king's forester in Yorkshire, mentioned in Camden.

See my answer, No. II. of Lady Roisia, where is Robin Hood's *True Pedigree*."

That the extraction of Robin Hood was noble, and that his right to the title of Earl of Huntingdon, according to Dr. Stukeley's pedigree, was not well founded, were subjects of controversy in the *Gentleman's Magazine* a few years before the appearance of the first edition of Mr. Ritson's *Robin Hood*. The controversy seems to have arisen in consequence of Dr. Percy's allusion in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* to Robin Hood's pedigree, published by Dr. Stukeley, and to his epitaph by Dr. Gale and Mr. Thoresby. The controversialists were, Mr. Pegge, under the signature of T. Row, and Mr. Gough, under the initials of D. H.

Mr. Gough's refutation of Robin Hood's presumed title to nobility, and the authenticity of his tomb-stone and epitaph thereon, must render any further dispute unnecessary as to what was his station in society, although Mr. Gough does reduce the hero from the title of earl to one

equally deserving of our interest,—that of an oppressed "English yeoman" or "forester."—*Editor.*

The following letter by Mr. Gough is extracted from the *Gentleman's Magazine:*

"Mr. Urban, "March 8, 1793.

"In turning over some of your former volumes, for the amusement of a winter's evening, and in search after some facts, of which your Magazine is in general the faithful record, I was agreeably surprised at the concurrence in your old correspondent, T. Row, vol. xxxvi. p. 260, with the present bishop of Dromore, concerning that hero of so many of the provincial songs, *Robin Hood,* who he conceives was so named *quasi Robbing Hood,* or *Hode,* but by vulgar fiction only *Earl of Huntingdon.* Your correspondent objects to *Hood* as a *surname.* I have long been of opinion, that his name and title were misnomers and imaginary honours; and that as *Robin* of *Ridsdale* was the name of a notorious robber in Northumberland, given to one of the Umfranvilles, and to one of the Hilliards in the Lancastrian army, in the reign of Edward IV,* and from them applied to a rude Roman statue in the Roman station in Risingham in Northumberland,† so Robin *Wood, Whode, o'th'wood,* q. d. of *Shirwood,* which was a forest of large extent and consideration in its time, was that of a deer-stealer of equal eminence in tract and neighbourhood, and that the title of *Earl* of *Huntingdon* was a nick-name for a great *hunter* or forest-marauder, who, like the borderers on most of our forests and chaces from that time to the present, thought the king's game public property.

* Hutchinson's Northumberland, 191, 192.

† Horsley, B. R. 239. Northumberland, xciii. Camden, Brit. iii. 249.

The severity of our forest laws is well known; and, at a time when predatory associations, if they may be so called, were as common as gangs of smugglers in the beginning of this century, or as the inroads of barons on one another five hundred years ago, we shall not wonder that a chieftain of generosity, partial to the poor at the expense of the rich, acquired a degree of immortality in song and story—

'Prædonum princeps et prædo mitissimus.'*

"If to this we add that he was an *outlaw*, he rises in consequence as in desperation. Tradition concerning him is rather of earlier date than history. By tradition is to be understood the affixing his name to so many different spots, as so many others have that of King *Arthur*, King *John*, and, for want of a better, that of the *Devil*. Tradition, also, is answerable for making so great a difference between Robin Hood and Little John in point of stature; just as every set of bones, whose owner cannot be ascertained, whether found on a heath or in a cemetery, must have belonged to a *giant*.

"Major,† as cited by Stowe, is believed to be the first

* Major in Camden's Brit. iii. 17, and Stowe.

† The whole of Major's account, which Stowe has incorporated into his Annals, p. 159, by translation, runs thus: "Circa hæc tempora [the reign of Richard I.] ut auguror, *Robertus Hudus* Anglus et *Parvus Joannes* latrones famatissimi [query, famo*sissi*mi] in nemoribus latuerunt, solum opulentorum virorum bona diripientes. Nullum nisi eos invadentem vel resistentem pro suarum rerum tuitione occiderunt. Centum sagittarios ad pugnam aptissimos Robertus latrociniis aluit, quos 400 viri fortissimi invadere non audebant. Rebus hujus Roberti gestis tota Britannia in cantibus utitur. Fœminam nullam opprimi permisit, nec pauperum bona surripuit, verum eos ex abbatum bonis oblatis opipare pavit. Viri rapinam improbo, sed latronum omnium humanissimus et princeps erat."—iv. 2. This last sentence Mr. Camden quoted too much from memory.—*Gough.*

of our historians who mentions him. The *rimes* of *Roben Hod* are mentioned by Piers Ploughman, who lived in the reign of Edward III.* The *ballads*, *gests*, and *plays*, of which he is the hero, are not *much* earlier than the date of printing among us. For these he was *as fit* a subject as King *Arthur* and King *Cophetua;* and among these he may take his place.

"The tomb shewn for his at Kirkles nunnery, Yorkshire, is a 'flat stone with a cross in the cemetery;'† which, having no one mark to assign it to him, may as well have covered any other person, and, from the cross, more probably a religious than a lay person. As to the story of his having been bled to death by design in that nunnery, it is but a story.

"Notwithstanding, therefore, the pains taken by the learned Dr. Stukeley,‡ from a manuscript of all the genealogies of the English nobility, drawn up by the great Lord Burghley, to deduce this sturdy outlaw from the earls of Huntingdon, descended from a daughter of Waltheof, by Judith, the Conqueror's niece, and from the earls, or rather *barons*§ of Kyme and Lindsey, by a daughter not mentioned by Dugdale, and married to Ralph FITZOOTH, a Norman lord of Kyme, whose great-grandson was ROBERT FITZOOTH, *pretended* earl of Huntingdon, we may venture to pronounce that he was nothing more or less than Robin WOOD, or the *Forester*, a notorious hunter, *i.e.* deer-stealer.¶ "D. H."

---

* Fol. 26, edit. 1550.

† Camden's Brit. iii. 36, 79. In your vol. xxxvi. 260, col. 2, l. 1, for park *Warwick*lees nunnery, read park *near Kirk*lees nunnery.

‡ Palæog. Brit. ii. 115.

§ Dugdale, Bar. i. 400, who gives a different pedigree of Gant.

¶ If the above genealogy be right, the earldom, or rather *barony* of

(H) Mr. Ritson inserts here a long note, quoting Grafton and the Sloane MS. in support of the low courses of Robin Hood's early life; all of which are fairly refuted by the anonymous writer in *The London and Westminster Review.* The following note, in which Dr. Stukeley entertains the same opinion as Mr. Ritson, is in the doctor's hand-writing, in his copy of Ritson's *Robin Hood,* afterwards Mr. Douce's, and now in the Bodleian Library: Dr. Stukeley says, that "Robin took to this wild way of life in imitation of his grandfather, Geoffery de Mandeville, who, being a favourer of Maud empress, K. Stephen took him prisoner at St. Alban's, and made him give up the tower of London, Walden, Plessis, &c., upon which he lived on plunder."—*Editor.*

(I) "Of these he chiefly affected Barnsdale, &c."] "Along on the lift hond," says Leland, "a iii. miles of betwixt Milburne and Feribridge I saw the wooddi and famose forrest of *Barnsdale,* wher they say that Robyn Hudde lyvid like an outlaw."—*Itinerary,* v. 101.

"They haunted about *Barnsdale forest, Compton* [read *Plumpton*] *parke,** and such other places."—*MS. Sloane.*

"His principal residence," says Fuller, "was in *Shirewood forrest* in this county [Notts], though he had another haunt (he is no fox that hath but one hole) near the sea in the North-riding in Yorkshire, where *Robin Hood's Bay*

Kyme descended to Robert Umfraville, Earl of Angos, baron of Prode [*Prudhoe*] and Redesdale, the Robin of Redesdale before-mentioned. Sir Gilbert Umfravile, knt. was certainly Lord of Kyme, 2 Henry V.

* Plumpton Park, upon the banks of the Petterell, in Cumberland, was formerly very large, and set apart by the kings of England for the keeping of deer. It was disafforested or disparked by Henry the Eighth.

still retaineth his name: not that he was any pirat, but a land-thief, who retreated to those unsuspected parts for his security." *Worthies of England*, p. 320.—*Ritson.*

The *Editor* found the following notice in one of Dr. Southey's amusing volumes of *The Doctor:*

"Among the good men, in Fuller's acceptation of the term, who have been in any way connected with Doncaster, the first in renown, as well as in point of time, is Robin Hood. Many men talk of him who never shot in his bow; but many think of him when they drink at his well, which is at Skelbroke, by the way side, about six miles from Doncaster on the York road. There is a small inn near, with Robin Hood for its sign; this country has produced no other hero whose popularity has endured so long. The Duke of Marlborough, the Duke of Cumberland, and the Marquis of Granby, have flourished upon sign-posts, and have faded there; so have their compeers Prince Eugene and Prince Ferdinand. Rodney and Nelson are fading; and the time is not far distant when Wellington also will have had his day. But, while England shall be England, Robin Hood will be a popular name."

Shakspeare has the following allusions to Robin Hood. 'The old duke,' in *As You Like It*, 'is already in the forest of Arden, and many merry men with him, and there they live, like the old Robin Hood of England.' Master Silence, that 'merry heart,' that man of mettle, 'sings,' in the sweet of the night, of

'Robin Hood, Scarlet and John.'

The honourable conditions of Robin's lawless rule over his followers were evidently in our poet's mind, when he makes Valentine say:

'I take your offer, and will live with you,
Provided that you do no outrages
On silly women and poor passengers.'"

The places of Robin Hood's exploits are thus particularly described in the play of *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntington* (Collier's edition, act iii. scene 2):

"*Robert.*—Wind once more, jolly huntsmen, all your horns;
Whose shrill sound, with the echoing wood's assist,
Shall ring a sad knell for the fearful deer,
Before our feather'd shafts, death's winged darts,
Bring sudden summons for their fatal ends.
"*Scarlet.*—It's full seven year since we were outlaw'd first,
And wealthy Sherwood was our heritage;
For all those years we reigned uncontroll'd,
From Barnsdale shrogs, to Nottingham's red cliffs;
At Blithe and Tickhill were we welcome guests.
Good George-a-Greene at Bradford was our friend,
And wanton Wakefield's Pinner lov'd us well.
At Barnsley dwells a potter tough and strong,
That never brook'd we brethren should have wrong.
The nuns of Farnsfield (pretty nuns they be)
Gave napkins, shirts, and bands to him and me.
Bateman of Kendall gave us Kendall green,
And Sharpe of Leeds, sharp arrows for us made:
At Rotheram dwelt our bowyer, God him bliss;
Jackson he hight, his bows did never miss.
This for our good; our scathe let Scathlock tell,
In merry Mansfield how it once befel.

It seems singular that the author of this play should confound two such personages as the shoemaker of Bradford, who made all comers "vail their staves," and George-a-Greene, the pinner of Wakefield; yet such is the case in the text. The exploits of both are celebrated in the play of the *Pinner of Wakefield* (Dodsley's O. P. vol. iii.) which seems to have been popular. Nevertheless, Henslowe in his MSS. speaks of George-a-Greene as one dramatic

piece, and of the *Pinner of Wakefield* as another, as if they were two distinct heroes. See Malone's *Shakspeare* by Boswell, iii. 300. Munday also makes Scathlock and Scarlet two distinct persons.—*Editor.*

(J) "LITTLE JOHN, WILLIAM SCADLOCK, GEORGE A GREEN, pinder of Wakefield, MUCH, a miller's son, and a certain monk or friar named TUCK."] As all these personages were the boon companions of Robin Hood, and bear a distinguished part in the various ballads and songs intended for publication, the following history and description of them is given entire from Mr. Ritson's notes, with some additions by the *Editor.*

Of these the pre-eminence is incontestably due to *Little John*, whose name is almost constantly coupled with that of his gallant leader. "*Robertus Hode and* littill Johanne," are mentioned together by Fordun, as early as 1341; and later instances of the connexion would be almost endless. After the words, "for debt became an outlaw," the Sloane MS. adds: "then joyninge to him many stout fellowes of lyke disposition, amongst whom one called *Little John* was principal or next to him, they haunted about Barnsdale forrest, &c."—*Ritson.*

In addition to the foregoing allusion to Little John, the editor, in his preface, has shewn that he acquired the name of *Little* in jest; and it is probable that the miller's son was nicknamed *Much* in ridicule also of his size. He was probably a great burly fellow, and as Robin had two followers rather larger than usual, *Little* John had his appellation given as a contradictory joke on his size. *Much*, which was formerly used in the sense of great or large, indicated in the same joculatory manner the other yeoman. Thus he had two big fellows familiarly known as *Much* and *Little*.

The following representation of Robin Hood and his two companions is copied from the cut in the first edition of *Robin Hood's Garland*, printed for J. Clark, W. Thackeray, and T. Passenger, 1686, in the editor's possession.

With respect to *friar Tuck*. "Though some say he was an other kynd of religious man, for that the order of fryers was not yet sprung up" (*MS. Sloane*), yet as the Dominican friars (or friars preachers) came into England in the year 1221, upwards of twenty years before the death of Robin Hood [?], and several orders of these religious had flourished abroad for some time, there does not seem much weight in that objection: nor, in fact, can one pay much regard to the term *frier*, as it seems to have been the common title given by the vulgar (more especially after the Reformation) to all the regular clergy, of which the friers were at once the lowest and most numerous. If *frier* Tuck be the same person who, in one of the oldest songs, is called *The curtal frier of Fountainsdale*, he must

necessarily have been one of the monks of that abbey, which was of the Cistertian order. However this may be, frier Tuck is frequently noticed, by old writers, as one of the companions of Robin Hood, and as such was an essential character in the morris-dance. He is thus mentioned by Skelton, laureat, in his "goodly interlude" of *Magnificence*, written about the year 1500, and with an evident allusion to some game or practice now totally forgotten and inexplicable:

> "Another bade shave halfe my berde,
> And boys to the pylery gan me plucke,
> And woldo have made me *freer Tuck*,
> To preche out of the pylery hole."

In the year 1417, as Stow relates, "one by his counterfeite name called *frier Tucke*, with manie other malefactors, committed many robberies in the counties of Surrey and Sussex, whereupon the king sent out his writs for their apprehension."—*Annales*, 1592.—*Ritson.*

In a note in the illustrations of act iv. scene 1, of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, in Knight's *Shakspere*, is the following notice of the Friar:

"The jolly friar Tuck of the old Robin Hood ballads—the almost equally famous friar Tuck of *Ivanhoe*—is the personage whom the outlaws here invoke. It is unnecessary for us to enter upon the legends

> 'Of Tuck the merry friar, which many a sermon made,
> In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and his trade,'

as old Drayton has it. It may be sufficient to give a representation of his 'bare scalp.' The following illustration is copied, with a little improvement in the drawing, from the friar in Mr. Tollett's painted window, representing the celebration of May Day, which has been engraved in Reed's and Malone's editions of Shakspere. We shall

have occasion hereafter more particularly to refer to that window; and we may, therefore, only mention here, that the figures which represent morris dancers are very spirited. One of the chief is supposed to be Maid Marian, the Queen of May; and, as Marian was the mistress of Robin Hood, who was occasionally styled King of May, it has been conjectured that the friar is Robin's jovial chaplain. At any rate, the figure is not unworthy of friar Tuck."

This painting, in the window of Mr. Tollett's mansion at Betley, in Staffordshire, has several times been engraved; and has formed the subject of various dissertations upon the origin and nature of the Morris dance. The first engraving appeared in Johnson and Steevens's edition of Shakspeare, 8vo. 1778, at the end of the first part of Henry IV, with Mr. Tollett's opinion upon the characters of the different figures represented in the dance. There are twelve panes or compartments; one, representing the may-pole; and eleven, figures in the dance.

After Mr. Tollett had given his description of them, he added the following; and as it approaches more nearly, perhaps, to the accurate one than any other, it is inserted entire.

"A gentleman," says Mr. Tollett, "of the highest class in historical literature, apprehends, that the representation upon my window is that of a morris-dance procession about a may-pole; and he inclines to think, yet with many doubts of its propriety in a modern painting, that the personages in it rank in the boustrophedon form. By this arrangement, says he, the piece seems to form a regular whole, and the train is begun and ended by a fool in the following manner; figure 12 is the well-known fool; figure 11 is a Morisco, and figure 10 a Spaniard, persons peculiarly pertinent to the morris-dance; and he remarks, that the Spaniard obviously forms a sort of middle turn betwixt the Moorish and the English characters, having the great fantastical sleeve of the one, and the laced stomacher of the other. Figure 9 is Tom the piper. Figure 8 the may-pole. Then follow the English characters, representing, as he apprehends, the five great ranks of civil life. Figure 7 is the franklin or private gentleman. Figure 6 is a plain churl or villane. He takes figure 5, the man within the hobby-horse, to be perhaps a Moorish king, and from many circumstances of superior grandeur plainly pointed out as the greatest personage of the piece, the monarch of the May, and the intended consort of our English maid Marian. Figure 4 is a nobleman. Figure 3 the friar, representative of all the clergy. Figure 2 is maid Marian, queen of May. Figure 1, the lesser fool, closes the rear.

"With regard to the antiquity of the painted glass," continues Mr. Tollett, "there is no memorial or tradi-

tional account transmitted to us; nor is there any date in the room but this, 1621, which is over a door, and which indicates in my opinion the year of building the house. *The Book of Sports, or lawful Recreations upon Sunday after Evening Prayers, and upon Holy-days,* published by King James in 1618, allowed May-games, morris-dances, and the setting up of May-poles; and as Ben Jonson's masque of the *Metamorphosed Gipsies* intimates, that Maid Marian, and the Friar, together with the often-forgotten hobby-horse, were sometimes continued in the morris-dance as late as the year 1621, I once thought that the glass might be stained about that time; but my present objections to this are the following ones. It seems, from the prologue to the play of *Henry VIII,* that Shakspeare's fools should be dressed 'in a long motley coat, guarded with yellow;' but the fool upon my window is not so habited; and he has upon his head a hood, which I apprehend might be the coverture of the fool's head before the days of Shakspeare, when it was a cap with a comb like a cock's, as both Dr. Warburton and Dr. Johnson assert; and they seem justified in doing so, from King Lear's fool giving Kent his cap, and calling it his coxcomb. I am uncertain whether any judgment can be formed from the manner of spelling the inscrolled inscription upon the May-pole, upon which is displayed the old banner of England, and not the union flag of Great Britain, or St. George's red cross and St. Andrew's white cross joined together, which was ordered by King James in 1606, as Stowe's *Chronicle* certifies. Only one of the doublets has buttons, which I conceive were common in Queen Elizabeth's reign; nor have any of the figures ruffs, which fashion commenced in the latter days of Henry VIII; and from their want of beards, also, I am inclined to suppose

they were delineated before the year 1535, when King 'Henry VIII commanded all about his court to poll their heads, and caused his own to be shaven.' Probably the glass was painted in his youthful days, when he delighted in May games, unless it may be judged to be of much higher antiquity by almost two centuries.

"Such are my conjectures upon a subject of much obscurity; but it is high time to resign it to one more conversant with the history of our ancient dresses."—*Tollett.*

Mr. Douce, in his *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, vol. II. p. 432, &c., has a learned and amusing dissertation on the ancient English morris dance, which he has illustrated by an engraving copied, as he says, from an exceedingly scarce one on copper by Israel Von Mecheln, or Meckenen, so named from the place of his nativity, a German village on the confines of Flanders, in which latter country this artist appears to have resided; and therefore in most of his prints we may observe the Flemish costume of his time. From the pointed shoes that we see in one of his figures, it must have been executed between the years 1460 and 1470, about which latter period the broad-toed shoes came into fashion in France and Flanders. It seems to have been intended as a pattern for goldsmith's work, probably a cup or tankard.

In this dissertation, Mr. Douce enters into a full description of the Robin Hood characters; and as this note has already extended to so great a length, his observations will appear in the appendix, together with a facsimile of the engraving.

In Hone's *Year Book*, pp. 834 to 855, is also a long article upon the morris dance, in which that indefatigable enquirer into our ancient manners and customs, sports and

games, has noticed much that has been written upon the morris dance by Mr. Tollett and Mr. Douce, with many original conjectures of his own, corroborated by a long extract from a curious and scarce tract, printed in 1609, entitled, "OLD MEG OF HEREFORDSHIRE FOR A MAYD MARIAN, AND HEREFORD TOWNE FOR A MORRIS DANCE; OR TWELVE MORRIS DANCERS IN HEREFORDSHIRE OF TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

Extracts from this article will also appear in the appendix.

The editor would only add the suggestion, whether the surname TUCK is not a generic appellation to a peculiarity in the habit of friars in general, and alludes to the dress of their order being *tucked* or folded round the waist by the means of the cord or girdle. Chaucer says of the REVE, in his *Canterbury Tales*,

"Tucked he was as is a friar about."

George a Green is *George o' the Green*, meaning perhaps, as Mr. Ritson says in his note, the *town-green*, in which the *pound* or *pinfold* stood, of which he had the care. He has been particularly celebrated, and "as good as George a green" is still a common saying. Drayton, describing the progress of the river Calder, in the West-riding of Yorkshire, has the following lines:

"It chanc'd she in her course on 'Kirkley' cast her eye,
Where merry Robin Hood, that honest thief, doth lie;
Beholding fitly too before how Wakefield stood,
She doth not only think of lusty Robin Hood,
But of his merry man, the Pindar of the town
Of Wakefield, George a Green, whose fames so far are blown
For their so valiant fight, that every freeman's song
Can tell you of the same, quoth she, be talk'd on long,
For ye were merry lads, and those were merry days."

Our gallant Pindar is thus facetiously commemorated by Drunken Barnaby:

"Hinc diverso curso, serò
Quod audissem de PINDERO
Wakefeeldensi, gloria mundi,
Ubi socii sunt jucundi,
Mecum statui peragrare
GEORGII fustem visitare."

"Turning thence, none could me hinder
To salute the WAKEFIELD PINDER:
Who, indeed 's the world's glory,
With his cumrades never sory.
This the cause was, lest you misse it,
GEORGIE's club I meant to visit."

"Veni Wakefeeld peramœnum
Ubi quærens GEORGIUM GRENUM,
Non inveni, sed in lignum
Fixum repere GEORGII signum,
Ubi allam bibi feram,
Donec GEORGIO fortior eram."

"Strait at WAKEFEELD I was seen a,
Where I sought for GEORGE A GREEN A;
But could find no such creature,
Yet on a signe I saw his feature:
Where strength of ale had so stir'd me,
I grew stouter farre than GEORDIE."—*Ritson.*

That the figure of the Pindar was a popular sign elsewhere than at Wakefield, that it extended even to London, is proved by one of him which still does, or a short time since did, exist at one of the oldest public-houses in Gray's Inn Lane; and the famous Bagnigge Wells, once a popular country excursion and resort for cockneys, but now in the heart of the town, had, over an ancient gate leading into the garden, a sculptured stone, with this inscription: "THIS IS BAGNIGGE HOUSE, NEARE THE PINDAR A WAKEFIELD,

1680;" proving the Pindar to be the older and better known of the two.

The following is the title of a thin duodecimo volume in the editor's possession: "The History of George a Green, Pindar of the Toun of Wakefield; his birth, calling, valour, and reputation in the country; with divers pleasant as well as serious passages in the course of his life and fortune. Illustrated with cuts.

—— "Famam extendere factis;
Hic virtutis opus." *Virg. Æneid.* lib. 10.

"London, printed for Samuel Ballard, at the Blue Ball, in Little Britain, 1706."

The little volume was no doubt one of the popular chap-books of the day; it is dedicated to the steward, gentlemen, and inhabitants of Wakefield, by N. W. From this history, the author would make it appear, that the Pindar and Robin Hood were contemporaries; that Robin was the first Earl of Huntington, and Mariana was Matilda, daughter to the Lord Fitzwalter; and, "having discovered the royal affections of Prince John for her, she retired herself into the forest of Sherwood, for the true love and affection she bore unto her best-beloved Robin."

The date of the Pindar's exploits is laid in the reign of Richard I. George a Green had his paramour, as Robin had, in a fair damsel named Beatrice, daughter of Justice Grimes. George a Green, like Robin Hood, had distinguished himself in an insurrection in defence of his sovereign; and his exploits and courage had made Robin's mistress, Mariana, jealous of his renown. The seventh chapter in the Pindar's history has the following title: "Of Robin Hood, Maid Mariana, and the bold yeoman; and how, envying the fame of George a Green, and the rumour of the beauty of the fair Beatrice, Mariana could

not be quiet till it could be tried whether Robin or George were the valiantest, or she or Beatrice the fairest."

The tenth chapter relates that a combat accidentally took place between Robin and George, of which their mistresses were spectators; the result of which is thus told: "The two virgins, who would have been actors themselves, were forced to be spectators of one of the bravest combats that ever was fought in Wakefield (quarter-staves were the weapons used). Long it lasted; and with great difficulty they contested which should be victor. At length, both being tired and weary, saith Robin, 'Hold thy hand, noble Pindar, for I protest thou art the stoutest man that I ever yet laid my hand on.' To whom the Pindar replied, 'Recall thy words, for thou never yet laid thy hand on me.' Robin replied, 'Nor will I, noble George, but in courtesie. Know then, I am Robin Hood; this is my Mariana, and these my bold yeomen, who are come as far as from the forest of Sherwood, only to prove thy valour and to be spectators of Beatrice's beauty, both of which I have found to exceed that liberal report which fame hath given out of them.' At which words the Pindar embraced him, and told him, that next to King Richard, he was the man he most honoured, and craved pardon of Matilda, otherwise called Maid Mariana. He caused Beatrice to submit herself unto her on her knees, to which she willingly assented; but the sweet lady would by no means suffer her; who confessed, that she could not have thought that the North country could have bred such a beauty. Much joy, therefore, there was on all sides."

The following is a correct copy of George a Green's person, taken from the frontispiece of the little volume. The cuts in it are generally very rude, consisting principally of fights with quarter-staves. The first, however, is relative

to an incident in the Pindar's early life, who was placed at school under a surly pedagogue, of which school George was captain; and being ordered to beg pardon of his master, he resolved to run away; previously taking his revenge for the whipping which he was to undergo by thrusting his head between his master's legs, "and he cast him off from his shoulders with such a tumbling quail, as we call a back somerset, and left him lying flat upon his back, half-dead, in the midst of the school."

Besides the companions of our hero enumerated in the text, and whose names are most celebrated and familiar, we find those of William of Goldsborough (mentioned by Grafton), Right-hitting Brand (by Mundy), and Gilbert with the White Hand, who is thrice named in the *Lyttell Geste of Robyn Hode*, and is likewise noticed by Bishop Gawin Douglas, in his *Palice of Honour*, printed at Edinburgh in 1570, but written before 1518:

"Thair saw I Maitland upon auld Beird Gray,
Robene Hude, and *Gilbert with the quhite 'hand*,'
How Hay of Nauchton slew, in Madin land."*

As no mention is made of Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and William of Cloudesley, either in the ancient legend, or in more than one of the numerous songs of Robin Hood, nor does the name of the latter once occur in the old metrical history of those famous archers reprinted in Percy's *Reliques*, and among *Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry*, it is to be concluded that they flourished at different periods, or at least had no connexion with each other. In a poem, however, intitled "Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and YOUNG William of Cloudesley, the second part," 1616, 4to. (*Bib. Bod. Art.* L. 71),—being a more modern copy than that in Selden, c. 39, which wants the title, but was probably printed with the first part, which it there accompanies, in 1605, differing considerably therefrom in several places, and containing many additional verses,—are the following lines, not in the former copy:

"Now beare thy father's heart, my boy,
Said William of Cloudesley then,
When i was young i car'd not for
The brags of sturdiest men.
The pinder of Wakefield, George a Green,
I try'd a sommers day,
Yet he nor i were victors made
Nor victor'd went away.
Old Robin Hood, nor Little John,
Amongst their merry men all,
Nor fryer Tuck, so stout and young,
My courage could appall."

* Scottish Poems, i. 122. The last verse is undoubtedly sense as it now stands; but a collation of manuscripts would probably authorize us to read:

"*Quhom* Hay of Nauchton *slew* in Madin land."

(K) "MARIAN."] Who or whatever this lady was, it is observable that no mention of her occurs either in the *Lytell Geste of Robin Hode*, or in any other poem or song concerning him, except a comparatively modern one of no merit (see part ii. song 24, first edition of Ritson). She is an important character, however, in the two old plays of *The Death* and *Downfall of Robert Earle of Huntington*, written before 1600, and is frequently mentioned by dramatic or other writers about that period. The morrice-dance, so famous of old time, was (as is elsewhere noticed) composed of the following constituent characters: *Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck*, and *Maid Marian*.

In the *First part of King Henry IV*, Falstaff says to the hostess, "there's no more faith in thee than in a stew'd prune; nor no more truth in thee than in a drawn fox; and for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee." Upon which Dr. Johnson observes, that "Maid Marian is a man dressed like a woman, who attends the daughters of the morris." "In the ancient songs of Robin Hood," says Percy, "frequent mention is made of Maid Marian, who appears to have been his concubine. I could quote," he adds, "many passages in my old manuscripts to this purpose, but shall produce only one:

> "Good Robyn Hood was living then,
> Which now is quite forgot,
> And so was fayre maid Marian," &c.

Mr. Steevens, too, after citing the old play of *The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon*, 1601, attempting to prove "that Maid Marian was originally a name assumed by Matilda, the daughter of Robert Lord Fitzwater, while Robert Hood remained in a state of outlawry," observes, that "Shakspeare speaks of Maid Marian in her

degraded state, when she was represented by a strumpet or a clown," and refers to figure 2 in the plate at the end of the play, with Mr. Tollett's observations on it. The widow, in Sir W. Davenant's *Love and Honour*, says, "I have been Mistress Marian in a maurice ere now;" and Mr. Warton quotes an old piece entitled, "Old Meg of Herefordshire for a Maid Marian, and Hereford town for a morris dance; or twelve morris dancers in Herefordshire of 1200 years old," London, 1609, 4to; "which is dedicated," he says, "to one Hall, a celebrated tabourer in that country." (*So far Ritson.*)

Maid Marian was buried at Dunmow Priory, in Essex, where is now to be seen her monument, or that of the fair Matilda, daughter of Robert, second Earl Fitzwalter. The present church of Dunmow formed merely the south aisle of a magnificent collegiate church, and of a religious house founded many years before the days of Robin Hood, by the sister of Raef Baynard, who held the manor in the time of Domesday survey. Far and near, extended a wild forest with its glens and dingles; but farm houses are now standing where the wolf used to range, and a public road passes within sight of the ancient building, and burying ground with head-stone worn and lichen dotted, and crumbling from long exposure to weather. Amongst the monuments in the church, the most conspicuous is a mural tomb, erected to the memory of Maid Marian. Shielded by a beautiful screen of dark old oak, coeval with the building, and which separates the nave from the chancel, it stands forth in bold relief, a relic of the olden time, which the convulsions of ages have yet spared. The head is covered with a woollen coif; the neck encircled with a collar, and a string of pendants falls upon an embroidered cap; a rich girdle and long robe, with sleeves close to the

wrist, and hands covered with rings, further indicate her rank. Angels were stationed beside her head, and a dog crouched at her feet. But rough hands have marred the tomb; the angels have been rudely broken, though the effigy itself has been spared.

A further account of Maid Marian will appear in Douce's illustrations of Shakspeare, in the appendix to this volume. —*Editor.*

(L) " The words of an old writer."] The author of the Sloane manuscript; which adds: " after such maner he procured the pynner of Wakefeyld to become one of his company, and a freyr called Muchel [r. Tuck]...Scarlock he induced upon this occasion; one day meeting him as he walket solitary and like to a man forlorne, because a mayd to whom he was affyanced was taken from [him] by the violence of her frends, and given to another that was old and welthy, wherupon Robin, understanding when the maryage-day should be, came to the church as a begger, and having his own company not far of, which came in so

soone as they hard the sound of his horne, he tooke the bryde perforce from him that [bare] in hand to have marryed her, and caused the priest to wed her and Scarlocke togeyther." This MS., of which great part is merely the old legend or *Lytell geste of Robyn Hode* turned into prose, appears to have been written before the year 1600.—*Ritson.*

(M) " has had the honour to be compared to the illustrious Wallace," &c.] In the first volume of Peck's intended supplement to the *Monasticon*, consisting of collections for the history of Præmonstratensian monasteries, now in the British Museum, is a very curious rhyming Latin poem, with the following title: " *Prioris Alnwicensis de bello Scotico apud Dumbarr, tempore regis Edwardi I. dictamen sive rithmus Latinus, quo de* WILLIELMO WALLACE, Scotico illo ROBIN WHOOD, *plura sed invidiose canit:*" and in the margin are the following date and reference: 22 Julii, 1304. 32. *E.* 1. *Regist. Prem. fol.* 59. a." This, it may be observed, is the first known instance of our hero's name being mentioned by any writer whatever; and affords a strong and respectable proof of his early popularity."—*Ritson.*

(N) " A proclamation was published, &c."] " The king att last," says the Harleian MS. " sett furth a proclamation to have him apprehended, &c." Grafton, after having told us that he " practised robberyes, &c.," adds, " The which beyng certefyed to the king, and he beyng greatly offended therewith, caused his proclamation to be made that whosoever would bring him quicke or dead, the king would geve him a great summe of money, as by the recordes in the Exchequer is to be seene: but of this promise no man enjoyed any benefite. For the sayd Robert Hood, being afterwardes troubled with sicknesse, &c."—(p. 85.) —*Ritson.*

(o) "At length, the infirmities of old age increasing upon him, &c."] Thus Grafton: "The sayd Robert Hood, beynn troubled with sicknesse, came to a certain nonry in Yorkshire called Bircklies [r. Kircklies], where desiryng to be let blood, he was betrayed and bled to death." The Sloane MS. says, that "[being] dystempered with could and age, he had great payne in his lymmes, his bloude being corrupted; therfore, to be eased of his payne by letting bloude, he repayred to the priores of Kyrkesey, which some say was his aunt, a woman very skylful in physique and surgery; who, perceyving him to be Robyn Hood, and waying how fel an enimy he was to religious persons, toke reveng of him for her owne howse and all others by letting him bleed to death. It is also sayd that one Sir Roger of Doncaster, bearing grudge to Robyn for some injury, incyted the priores, with whome he was very familiar, in such a manner to dispatch him." See the *Lytell geste of Robyn Hode*, ad finem. The Harleian MS. after mentioning the proclamation "sett furth to have him apprehended," adds, "at which time it happened he fell sick at a nunnery in Yorkshire called Birkleys [r. Kirkleys]; and desiring there to be let blood, hee was beytrayed and made bleed to death."

"Kirkleys, Kirklees, now called Kirkless Park, between the towns of Wakefield and Huddersfield, (at present the seat of Sir George Armitage, Bart.), or Kirkleghes, formerly Kuthale, in the deanery of Pontefract, and archdeaconry of the West-riding of Yorkshire, was a Cistercian, or, as some say, a Benedictine nunnery, founded, in honour of the virgin Mary and St. James, by Reynerus Flandrensis, in the reign of king Henry II.

"One may wonder," says Dr. Fuller, "how he escaped the hand of justice, dying in his bed, for ought is found to

the contrary: but it was because he was rather a *merry* than a *mischievous* thief (complementing passengers out of their purses) never murdering any but *deer*, and..... 'feasting' the vicinage with his venison." (*Worthies*, page 320.)—*Ritson.* See also the following note.

(P) "He was intered under some trees at a short distance from the house; a stone being placed over his grave with an inscription to his memory. "*Kirkley monasterium monialium*, ubi Ro: Hood nobilis ille exlex sepultus." Leland's *Collectanea*, i. 54. "Kirkleys Nunnery, in the woods whereof Robin Hood's grave is, is between Halifax and Wakefield upon Calder." *Letter from Jo. Saville to W. Camden, Illus. viro epis.* 1691.

—— "as Caldor comes along,
It chanc'd she in her course on 'Kirkley' cast her eye.
Where merry Robin Hood, that honest thief, doth lie."
Poly-Olbion, Song 28.

See also Camden's *Britannia*, 1695, p. 709.

In the second volume of Dr. Stukeley's *Itinerarium Curiosum* is an engraving of "The prospect of Kirkleys abby, where Robin Hood dyed, from the footway leading to Heartishead church, at a quarter of a mile distance. A. The New Hall. B. The Gatehouse of the Nunnery. C. *The trees among which Robin Hood was buryed.* D. The way up the Hill where this was drawn. E. Bradley wood. F. Almondbury hill. G. Castle field. Drawn by Dr. Johnston among his Yorkshire antiquitys, p. 54, of the drawings. E. Kirkall, sculp." It makes plate 99 of the above work, but is unnoticed in the letter-press.

In the following cut all the references are omitted except letter C, over the trees among which Robin Hood was buried.

According to the Sloane MS. the prioress, after "letting him bleed to death, buryed him under a great stone by the hywayes syde;" which is agreeable to the account in Grafton's chronicle, where it is said that, after his death, "the prioresse of the same place caused him to be buried by the highway-side, where he had used to rob and spoyle those that passed that way. And vpon his grave the sayde prioresse did lay a very fayre stone, wherein the names of *Robert Hood, William of Goldesborough,* and others were graven. And the cause why she buryed him there was, for that the common passengers and travailers, knowyng and seeyng him there buryed, might more safely and without feare take their jorneys that way, which they durst not do in the life of the sayd outlawes. And at eyther ende of the sayde tombe was erected a crosse of stone, which is to be seene there at this present."

"Near unto Kirklees the noted Robin Hood lies buried under a grave-stone that yet remains near the park, but the inscription scarce legible."—Thoresby's *Ducatus Leodiensis,* p. 91. In the *Appendix,* p. 576, is the following note, with a reference to "page 91":

"Amongst the papers of the learned Dr. Gale, late Dean of Yorke, was found this epitaph of Robin Hood:

"'Hear underneath dis laitl stean
laiz robert earl of Huntingtun
near arcir ber az hie sa geud
an pipl kauld im robin heud
sick utlawz az hi an iz men
bil england nibr si agen.
obitt 24 [r. 14] kal dekembris 1247.'"

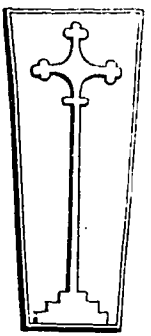
"The genuineness of this epitaph has been questioned. Dr. Percy, in the first edition of his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), says, "It must be confessed this epitaph is suspicious, because, in the most ancient poems of Robin Hood, there is no mention of this imaginary earldom." This reason, however, is by no means conclusive, the most ancient poem now extant having no pretension to the antiquity claimed by the epitaph: and indeed the doctor himself should seem to have afterwards had less confidence in it, as, in both the subsequent editions, those words are omitted, and the learned critic merely observes that the epitaph *appears* to him *suspicious*. It will be admitted that the bare suspicion of this ingenious writer, whose knowledge and judgment of ancient poetry are so conspicuous and eminent, ought to have considerable weight. As for the present editor's part, though he does not pretend to say that the language of this epitaph is that of Henry the Third's time, nor indeed to determine of what age it is, he can perceive nothing in it from whence one should be led to pronounce it spurious, *i. e.* that it was never inscribed on the grave-stone of Robin Hood. That there actually was some inscription upon it in Mr. Thoresby's time, though then scarce legible, is evident from his own words: and it should be remembered, as well that

the last century was not the era of imposition, as that Dr. Gale was both too good and too learned a man either to be capable of it himself or to be liable to it from others.

"That industrious chronologist and topographer, as well as respectable artist and citizen, master Thomas Gent, of York, in his 'List of religious houses,' annexed to 'The ancient and modern state of' that famous city, (1730,12mo. p. 234) informs us that he had been told, "That his [Robin Hood's] tombstone, having his effigy thereon, was ordered not many years ago, by a certain knight, to be placed as a hearth-stone in his great hall. When it was laid over-night, the next morning it was 'surprisingly' removed [on or to] one side; and so three times it was laid, and as successively turned aside. The knight, thinking he had done wrong to have brought it thither, ordered it should be drawn back again; which was performed by a pair of oxen and four horses, when twice the number could scarcely do it before. But as this,' adds the sagacious writer, 'is a story only, it is left to the reader to judge at pleasure.' *N.B.* This is the second instance of a miracle wrought in favour of our hero.

In Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, page cviii. is "the figure of the stone over the grave of Robin Hood [in Kirklees park, being a plain stone with a sort of cross fleurée thereon], now broken and much defaced, the inscription illegible. That printed in Thoresby, *Ducat. Leod.* 576, from Dr. Gale's papers, was never on it. The late Sir Samuel Armitage, owner of the premises, caused the ground under it to be dug a yard deep, and found it had never been disturbed; so that it was probably brought from some other place, and by vulgar tradition ascribed to Robin Hood" [refers to "Mr. Watson's letters in Antiquary Society Minutes"]. This is probably the tomb-

stone of Elisabeth de Staynton, mentioned in a preceding note.



The old epitaph is, by some anonymous hand, in a work entitled "*Sepulchrorum Inscriptiones; or a curious collection of nine hundred of the most remarkable Epitaphs,*" Westminster, 1727, [vol. ii. p. 73] thus not inelegantly paraphrased:

"Here, underneath this little stone,
Thro' Death's assaults, now lieth one,
Known by the name of Robin Hood,
Who was a thief and archer good;
Full thirteen (r. thirty) years, and something more,
He robb'd the rich to feed the poor:
Therefore, his grave bedew with tears,
And offer for his soul your prayers."

(R) "Various dramatic exhibitions."] Mr. Ritson here more particularly alludes to the "Playe of Robin Hode, very proper to be played in Maye Games"; which, he says, is probably as old as the fifteenth century. He has inserted it in his Appendix, and it will form part of the second volume of the present edition.

Mr. Ritson then quotes largely from two other plays: 1. "The Downfall of Robert Earle of Huntington, after-

ward called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde; with his love to chaste Matilda, the Lord Fitzwater's daughter, afterwardes his fair maide, Marian. Acted by the right honourable, the earle of Nottingham, lord high admiral of England, his servants. Imprinted at London, for William Leake, 1601." 4to. b. l.

2. "The death of Robert, earle of Huntington, otherwise called Robin Hood of merrie Sherwodde; with the lamentable tragedie of chaste Matilda, his faire maid Marian, poysoned at Dunmowe, by King John. Acted, &c. Imprinted, &c. 1601." 4to. b. l.

These two plays, usually called the first and second part of *Robin Hood*, were always, on the authority of Kirkman, falsely ascribed to Thomas Heywood, till Mr. Malone fortunately retrieved the names of the true authors, Anthony Mundy and Henry Chettle.—Vid. Malone's *Shakspeare*, 1790.

Both of these plays have since been published by Mr. J. Payne Collier in his supplement to *Dodsley's Old Plays*, 1833. Mr. Collier ascribes the first play very justly to Anthony Munday alone, the second to Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle; Chettle, it appears, by an extract given by Mr. Collier from a memorandum in *Henslowe's Diary* in Dulwich College, having merely received ten shillings "for writing of *Robin Hood* for the Corte."

"The story," says Mr. Collier, "is treated with a simplicity bordering upon rudeness, and historical facts are perverted just as suited the purpose of the writer. Whether we consider it as contemporary with or preceding the productions of the same class by Shakspeare, it is a relic of high interest, and nearly all the sylvan portions of the play, in which Robin Hood and his 'merry men' are engaged, are of no ordinary beauty. Some of the serious

scenes are also extremely well written, and the blank verse interspersed with rhymes, as was usual in our earlier dramas, by no means inharmonious."

3. " The sad Shepherd, or a tale of Robin Hood."

In allusion to this drama, Mr. Ritson says, " The story of our renowned archer cannot be said to have been wholly occupied by hands without a name; since, not to mention Munday or Drayton, the celebrated Ben Jonson intended a pastoral drama on this subject, under the above title; but dying in the year 1637, before it was finished, little more than the two first acts have descended down to us. His last editor (Mr. Whalley), while he regrets that it is but a fragment, speaks of it in raptures, and, indeed, not without evident reason, many passages being eminently poetical and judicious."

After enumerating the characters and " the argument" of the two acts that have come down to us entire, Mr. Ritson concludes his notice as follows :—" Nothing more of the author's design appearing, we have only to regret the imperfect state of a pastoral drama, which, according to the above learned and ingenious editor, would have done honour to the nation."*

(s) " Innumerable poems, rimes, songs, and ballads."] The original and most ancient pieces of this nature have all perished in the lapse of time, during a period of between five and six hundred years' continuance; and all we now know of them is, that such things once existed. In the *Vision of Pierce Plouwman,* an allegorical poem, thought

* This play appears to have been performed upon the stage after the restoration. The prologue and epilogue (spoken by Mr. Portlock) are to be found in No. 1009 of the Sloane MSS. It was republished, with a continuation and notes, by Mr. Waldron, of Drury Lane theatre, in 1783.

to have been composed soon after the year 1360, and generally ascribed to Robert Langeland, the author introduces an ignorant, idle, and drunken secular priest, the representative, no doubt, of the parochial clergy of that age, in the character of Sloth, who makes the following confession:

> "I cannot parfitli mi paternoster, as the priest it singeth,
> But I can RYMS OF ROBEN HODE, and *Randolf erl of Chester*,
> But of our lorde or our lady I lerne nothyng at all."

Fordun, the Scottish historian, who wrote about 1340, speaking of Robin Hood and Little John, and their accomplices, says, "of whom the foolish vulgar in comedies and tragedies make lewd entertainment, and are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing them above all other ballads: and Mair (or Major) whose history was published by himself in 1521, observes that "The exploits of this Robert are celebrated in songs throughout all Britain." So, likewise, Hector Bois (or Boethius), who wrote about the same period, having mentioned, "that waithman Robert Hode with his fallow litil Johnne," adds, "of quhom ar mony fabillis and mery sportis soung amang the vulgar pepyll." Whatever may have been the nature of the compositions alluded to by the above writers, several of the pieces printed in the present collection are unquestionably of great antiquity; not less, that is, than between three and four hundred years old. The *Lytell geste*, which is first inserted, is probably the oldest thing upon the subject we now possess; but a legend, apparently of the same species, of perhaps a still earlier date, was once extant, of which it is some little satisfaction to be able to give even the following fragment, from a single leaf, fortunately preserved in one of the volumes of old printed ballads in the British Museum, in a hand-writing as old as Henry the

Sixth's time. It exhibits the character of our hero and his *fidus Achates* in the noblest point of view :—

" He *sayd* Robyn Hod...yne the preson,
And owght off hit was *gon*-

The porter rose a-non certeyn,
As sone as he hard Johan call;
Lytyll Johan was redy with a sword,
And bare dym throw to the wall.

Now will I be jayler, sayd lytyll Johan,'
And toke the keys in hond;
He toke the way to Robyn Hod,
And sone he hyme unbond.

He gaffe hym a good swerd in his hond,
His hed ther-with for to kepe :
And ther as the wallis wer lowest,
Anon down ther they lepe.

. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
To Robyn . . . . sayd :

I have *done* the a god torn for an...
Quit me when thow may;
I have done the a gode torne, sayd lytyll [Johan]
Forsothe as I the saye;
I have browghte the under the gren wod...
Farewell and have gode daye.

Nay, be my trouthe, sayd Robyn,
So schall it never bee;
I make the master, sayd Robyn,
Off all my men & me.
Nay, be my trowthe, said lytell Johan.
So schall it never bee." *Ritson.*

The whimsical and merry author of *The Bee-hive of the Romish Church*, speaking of some of their idle

ceremonies on Whitsunday and the Ascension, says, "I suon me a man doeth often spende a penny or two too see a *play of Robin Hood*, or a Morris daunce, which were a great deal better bestowed upon these apish toyes of these good prestes, which counterfeit all these matters so handsomely, that it will doe a man as much good to see them as in frostie weather to goe naked."—p. 207.—Note in Mr. Douce's copy of *Robin Hood.*

"Tales of Robin Hood are good among fooles."
Heywood's Epigrams. (Ditto.)

"Thirdly; when the act consisteth only in words, as to sing a song of Robin Hood, albeit it be neither necessary nor pertinent to the cause, it maketh an interruption."—Swinburn *on Spousals*, p. 161. (Ditto.)

"Wholy scripture concernynge
Their frantyke foly, is so besoisshe
That they contempre in Englisshe
To have the new Testament.
But as for Tales of Robin Hode
With anether jestes nether honest nor goode
They have no impediment."

Freeman, *Anonymous Satire against Wolsey*, b. l., no date, 12mo. beginning "Rede me, and be not wrothe." In Mr. Steevens's collection. (Note by Douce.)

The following allusions to Robin Hood songs have also fallen under the notice of the present editor.

From MS. Porkington, No. 10, f. 152, written in the reign of Edward IV, on vellum and paper, preserved in the library of W. O. Gore, Esq. of Shropshire :—

"Ther were tynkerris in tarlottus, the met was fulle goode,
The sowe sat one him benche, and harppyde *Robyn Hoode.*"

The last verse of a burlesque song in MS. Cotton. Vesp. A. xxv. fol. 135, temp. Henry VIII :—

" Robyne is gone to Hu[n]tyngton,
To bye our gose a flayle;
Lyke Spip, my yongest son,
Was huntyng of a snalle.
Newes! newes!"

The following is the last verse of a song on Woman, from MS. Lambeth, 306, fol. 135, of the fifteenth century.

" He that made this songe full good,
Came of the northe and of the sothern blode,
And somewhat kyne to *Robyn Hode;*
Yit all we be nat soo."

From *Follie's Anatomie*, by H. Hutton, 1619, Sign. B. 4:—

" He has a subject he did late invent,
Will shame the riming sculler, Jack a Lent,
Tis writ in print; perhaps you 'll see 't anon,
Twas made of *Robin Hood* and Little John."

The following lines from Chaucer cannot be read without applying them to Robin Hood. They may not have been meant to characterise him, but they give so minute and doubtless accurate description of the habit and appearance of a forester of the fourteenth century, that they may here be appropriately inserted.

" And he was cladde in cote and hode of grēene;
A shife of peacock* arrowes bright, and kene
Under his belt he bore ful thirtily;
Wel coulde he dresse his takel generally:—
His armes droupid not with fetheres lowe,
And in his hand he bare a mighty bow.
And hed+ hadde he, with a browne visage;

* The peacock's feathers seem to have been generally made use of for feathering arrows.—*Warton's Eng. Fest.* v. i. p. 431, note l, quarto edit.

+ His hair was closely trimmed; so that his head appeared round like a nut.

Of woode-crafte* could he wel alle the usage;
Upon his arme he bare a gale bracer;†
And by his side a sword and bokeler;
And on that other side a gaie daggere,
Harnessed wel, and sharpe as point of speere;
A cristope‡ on his brest of silver speene;
An horn he bare the bandtie§ was of grene,
A forster was he sotheley as I guess."

Prologue to Canterbury Tales.

(T) " Has given rise to divers proverbs, &c."] Proverbs in all countries are, generally speaking, of very great antiquity; and therefore it will not be contended, that those concerning our hero are the oldest we have. It is highly probable, however, that they originated in or near his own time, and of course have existed for upwards of five hundred years, which is no modern date.

Mr. Ritson then quotes several, not in chronological order, but by the age of the authorities they are taken from. The following are from Ritson.

1. " Good even, good Robin Hood."

The allusion is to civility extorted by fear. It is preserved by Skelton in that most biting satire against Cardinal Wolsey, *Why come ye not to Court?*

2. " Many men talk of Robin Hood that neere shot in his bow."—Fuller's *Worthies.*

---

* Wood-crafte—the wiles of hunting.

† Bracer—armour for the arms. Roger Ascham gives us the following uses of it. " A bracer serveth for two causes; one to save his arme from the strype of the stringe, and his doublet from wearing. And the other is, that the stringe gliding sharplye and quicklye off the bracer, may the sharper shoot."

‡ St. Christopher presided over the weather, and was the patron of field sports.

§ The strap by which it was suspended.—See Junius in *Voc. Bawdreck.*

On the back of a ballad in Anthony Wood's collection, he has written :—

> " There be some that prate
> Of Robin Hood, and of his bow,
> Which never shot therein, I trow."

Ray gives it thus :

> " Many talk of Robin Hood that never shot in his bow,
> And many talk of Little John that never did him know."

3. " To overshoot Robin Hood."

" And lastly and chiefly, they cry out with open mouth as if they had overshot Robin Hood, that Plato banished them (*i. e.* poets) out of his commonwealth."—Sir P. Sidney's *Defence of Poesie.*

4. " Tales of Robin Hood are good [enough] for fools."

This proverb is inserted in Camden's *Remains,* but the word in brackets is supplied by Ray.

5. " To sell Robin Hood's pennyworths."

" It is spoken of things sold under half their value, or if you will, half sold, half given. Robin Hood came lightly by his ware, and lightly parted therewith; so that he could afford the length of his bow for a yard of velvet." —Fuller's *Worthies.*

The saying is alluded to in the old north-country song of Randal a Barnaby:

> " All men said, it became me well,
> And Robin Hood's pennyworth I did sell."

6. " Come, turn about, Robin Hood."

Implying that to challenge or defy our hero, must have been the *ne plus ultra* of courage. It occurs in *Wit and Drollery,* 1661.

> " Oh Love, whose power and might,
> No creature ere withstood,
> Thou forcest me to write,
> Come turn about Robin Hood."

7. " As crook'd as Robin Hood's bow."

That is, we are to conceive, when bent by himself.

The following stanza of a modern Irish song is the only authority for this proverb.

" The next with whom I did engage,
It was an old woman worn with age;
Her teeth were like tobacco pegs,
Besides she had two bandy legs;
Her back more crook'd than Robin Hood's bow,
Purblind and decrepid, unable to go,
Altho' her years were sixty-three,
She smil'd at the humours of Soosthe Bue."

So far Ritson.

8. " To go round by Robin Hood's barn."

This saying is used to imply the going of a short distance by a circuitous method, or the farthest way about.

9. " He makes Robin Hood's pennyworths."—Ray.

Camden calls him, *prædonem mitissimum.* Of his stolen goods he afforded good pennyworths. Lightly come lightly go.

10. " Robin Hood's choice, this or nothing."—*Vox graculi*, p. 67.

So a man is said to have Hobson's choice, when he must either take what is left him, or choose whether he will have any part or no. The proverb arose, no doubt, from the general character of Robin Hood's free and predatory life.

(u) " To swear by him or some of his companions appears to have been a usual practice."] The earliest instance of this practice occurs in a pleasant story among *Certaine merry Tales of the mad men of Gottam*, compiled in the reign of Henry VIII, by Dr. Andrew Borde, an eminent physician of that period, in an old edition in black letter, without date (in the Bodleian library), being the

first tale in the book (a quotation from which is given by Ritson).

"By the bare scalp of Robin Hood's fat frier," is an oath put by Shakspeare into the mouth of one of his outlaws in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, act 4, scene 1. "Robin Hood's fat frier" is frier Tuck.

(v) "His songs have been chanted, and his service preferred to the word of God, &c."] Vide *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. iii. p. 154, for an account of a man going to be hung, who sang part of an old song of Robin Hood. To this may be added, that at Edinburgh, in 1505, "Sandy Stevin menstrall, (*i. e.* magician) was convicted of blasphemy, alledging, that he would give no more credit to the New Testament, then to a tale of Robin Hood, except it wer confirmed by the doctours of the church."—Knox's *Historie of the Reformation in Scotland*, Edin. 1732, p. 368.

William Roy, in a bitter satire against Cardinal Wolsey, intitled "*Rede me and be not wrothe, for I say nothynge but trothe*," printed abroad, about 1525, speaking of the bishops, says:—

> "Their frantyke foly is so pevisshe,
> That they contempne in Englysshe
> To have the new testament;
> But as for tales of Robyn Hode,
> With wother jestes neither honest nor goode,
> They have no impediment."

The following quaint anecdote is introduced into Bishop Latimer's *Twelfth Sermon preached before Edward the Sixth*, and is peculiarly descriptive of Robin Hood's popularity, and of the May games instituted to his memory.

"I came myself once," says the Bishop, "to a place, riding on a journey homeward from London, and I sent

word over night into the town, that I would preach there in the morning, because it was a holiday; and methought it was an holiday's work. The church stood in my way, and I took my horse and my company, and went thither. I thought I should have found a great company in the church, and when I came there the church door was fast locked. I tarried there half an hour and more; at last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me, and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day. The parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let them not.' I fain was there to give place to Robin Hood: I thought my rochet should have been regarded, though I were not; but it would not serve, it was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men. It is no laughing matter, my friends, it is a weeping matter, a heavy matter; a heavy matter, under the pretence of gathering for Robin Hood, a traitor and a thief, to put out a preacher, to have his office less esteemed; to prefer Robin Hood before the ministration of God's word, and all this hath come of unpreaching prelates. This realm hath been ill provided for, that it hath had such corrupt judgments in it, to prefer Robin Hood to God's word. If the bishops had been preachers, there should never have been any such thing; but we have good hope of better. We have had a good beginning; and beseech God to continue it."—*Ritson.*

Another and almost similar instance of the popularity of the Robin May games, is the following.

"There is a neighbour of our's, an honest priest, who was sometimes (simple as he now stands) a Vice in a play, for want of a better; his name is Gliberie of Hawstead in Essex, hee goes much to the pulpit. On a time, I thinke it was the last May, he went up with a full resolution, to

doe his businesse with great commendations. But see the fortune of it. A boy, in a church, hearing either the summer lord of his May-game, or Robin Hood with his morris daunce, going by church, out goes the boye. Good Gliberie, though he were in the pulpit, yet had a mind to his old companions abroad (a company of merry grigs you must thinke them to be, as merry as a Vice upon a stage), seeing the boy going out, finished his matter presently with John of London's amen, saying, 'Ha ye faith, boy, are they there? Then ha with thee,' and so came down, and among them he goes—'*Hay any work for Cooper.*'"—*Editor.*

(w) The patron of archery; festival allotted to him; solemn games instituted to his memory, &c.] The bow and arrow makers, in particular, have always held Robin Hood's memory in the utmost reverence. Thus, in the old ballad of *London's Ordinary:*

> "The hosiers will dine at the Leg,
> The drapers at the sign of the Brush,
> The fletchers to Robin Hood will go,
> And the spendthrift to Beggar's Bush."

The picture of our hero is yet a common sign in the country, and before hanging signs were abolished in London, must have been still more so in the city, there being at present no less than a dozen alleys, courts, lanes, &c., to which he, or it, has given a name. (See Baldwin's *New Complete Guide*, 1770.) The *Robin Hood Society*, a club or assembly for public debate, or school for oratory, is well known. It was held at a public-house which had once borne the sign, and still retained the name of this great man, in Butcher-row, near Temple Bar.—*Ritson.*

Butcher-row has almost faded from memory, amongst the modern improvements and new streets and roads made

in the metropolis in the course of the present century. The Robin Hood Society is, however, likely to be longer perpetuated, a history of its origin, &c., having been published in 1764, with the following title: "The History of the Robin Hood Society, in which the origin of that illustrious body of men is traced; the method of managing their debates is shewn; the memoirs of the various members that compose it are given; and some original speeches, as specimens of their oratorical abilities, are recorded, chiefly compiled from original papers. London, printed for H. Payne, at Dryden's Head, in Paternoster-row, 1764."

The volume is curious, containing the articles and rules which were agreed to at its formation in 1613, and the names of its original members; at the head of which stands Sir Hugh Middleton, the projector of the New River, which still supplies many parts of the metropolis with water. It was at this gentleman's house that the society held their first meeting; and, after congratulating each other on their proposed undertaking, and drinking two glasses of wine each, Sir Hugh got into a large elbow chair, and officiated as president. Sir Hugh then read the question to them for their night's debate, which was as follows: "Whether the common methods of educating youth in this nation are not defective, both with respect to morals and knowledge of the English tongue." The society was first named "The Societie for free and candyd Enquirie," and it assembled at each other's houses. In 1660 it seems to have acquired much fame; and was visited by King Charles the Second in disguise. In consequence of the increase of its popularity and members, it moved to the Essex Head in Essex Street, taking the name of the "Essex Head Society," and finally in 1747 it moved to the Robin Hood in Butcher Row, and thence took the

name of the Robin Hood Society. The volume contains the initial names of its principal members, and the subjects debated, and some of the speeches reported in short hand."

In regard to the Festivals allotted to Robin Hood and the solemn Games instituted in honour of his memory, they were, Mr. Ritson observes, "of great antiquity, and different kinds, and appear to have been solemnized on the first and succeeding days of May; and to owe their original establishment to the cultivation and improvement of the manly exercise of archery, which was not in former times practised merely for the sake of amusement." Mr. Ritson then enters into a description of them from Stow's *London*, Niccolls's *London Artillery*, 1616, and various churchwardens' accounts, which enumerate the sums expended upon them out of the parochial rates.

(x) "His bow, arrows, cap, chair, well, &c. &c."] Several of these habiliments, &c. of Robin Hood have been before alluded to in the editor's preface, p. xi. That some of these interesting relics, or the remembrance of them, may have been preserved, is by no means improbable, when the popularity of our hero is considered.

Mr. Ritson quotes the following authorities for their existence at various periods.

"We omitted," says Ray, "the sight of Fountains Abbey, where ROBIN HOOD'S Bow is kept."—*Itineraries*, 1700, p. 161.

"Having pleased ourselves with the antiquities of Nottingham, we took horse and went to visit the WELL, and ancient CHAIR of Robin Hood, which is not far from hence, within the forest of Sherwood.

"Being placed in the chair, we had a cap, which they say was his, very formally put upon our heads, and having

performed the usual ceremonies befitting so great a solemnity, we received the freedom of the chair, and were incorporated into the society of that renowned brotherhood."—Brome's *Travels over England, &c.* 1700, p. 85.

" On one side of this forest (Sherwood) towards Nottingham," says the author of the *Travels of Tom Thumb over England and Wales*, (*i. e.* Robert Dodsley) " I was shewn a *chair*, a *bow*, and *arrow*, all said to have been his, Robin Hood's property."—p. 82.

" I was pleased with a *Slipper*, belonging to the famous Robin Hood, fifty years ago, at *Saint Ann's Well*, near Nottingham, a place upon the borders of Sherwood Forest, to which he resorted."—*Journey from Birmingham to London by* W. Hutton, 1785, p. 174.

Robin Hood's *Bay* is both a bay and a village on the coast of Yorkshire between Whitby and Scarborough. It is mentioned by Leland as a " fischer tounlet of twenty bootes caulled *Robyn Huddis Bay;* a dok or bosom of a mile yn length." (*Itinerary*, i. 53.)

" Over a spring call'd Robin Hood's Well, three or four miles on this side (*i. e.* north) of Doncaster, and but a quarter of a mile only from a town called Skelborough and Bourwallis, is a very handsome stone arch, erected by the Lord Carlisle, where passengers from the coach frequently drink of the fair water, and give their charity to poor people who attend there." (Gent's *York*, 1730, p. 234.)

Though there is no attendance at present, nor is the water altogether so *fair* as it might and should be, the case was otherwise in the days of honest Barnaby.

" Veni Doncaster, &c.
Nescit situs artem modi,
PUTEUM ROBERTI HOODI
Veni, et liquente vina

Vincto catino catena,
Tollens sitim, parcum odi,
Solvens obulum custodi."

" Thence to Doncaster, &c.
Thirst knows neither man nor measure.
Robin Hood's well was my treasure;
In a common dish enchained,
I my furious thirst restrained,
And because I drank the deeper,
I paid two farthings to the keeper."

A different well, sacred to Robin Hood, or to Saint Ann, has been before mentioned.

Epigram on Robin Hood's Well, " a fine spring on the road ornamented by Sir John Vanburgh; by Roger Gale, Esq." (*Bib. Topog. Britan.* No. II. part III. p. 427.)

" Nympha fui quondam latronibus hospita sylvæ
Heu nimium sociis nota, Robine, tuis.
Me pudet innocuos latices fudisse scelestis,
Jamque viatori pocula tuta fero,
En pietatis honos! Comes hanc mihi Carliolensis
Ædem sacravit quâ bibis, hospes, aquas."

In " Jack of Dover, his Quest of Inquirie, or his privy search for the veriest foole in England, a Collection of Merry Tales published at the beginning of the Sixteenth Century, London," reprinted for the Percy Society, 1842, p. 4, under the " Foole of Hereforde," is the following allusion to Robin Hood's well:

" Another time I made him (a silly witted gentleman) believe, that in the forest of Sherwood in Nottinghamshire were seen five hundred of the king of Spaine's gallies, which went to besiedge Robbin Heode's well, and that forty thousand schollers with elderne squirts performed such a peece of service, as they were all in a manner broken and overthrown in the forrest."

After having quoted so much relative to this famous Well, it is pleasing to be able to give an accurate representation of it, which Mr. Fairholt has copied from a rare print in the collection presented to the British Museum by George the Third;* and which forms the tail-piece to the editor's preface, p. xxxviii.

(x) "After his death his company was dispersed."] They, and their successors, disciples, or followers, are supposed to have been afterwards distinguished, from the name of their gallant leader, by the title of *Roberdsmen*. Lord Coke, who is somewhat singular in accusing him of living "by robbery, burning of houses, felony, waste and spoil, and principally by and with vagabonds, idle wanderers, night-walkers, and draw-latches," says, that "albeit he lived in Yorkshire, yet men of his quality took their denomination of him, and were called *Roberdsmen* throughout all England. Against these men," continues he, "was the statute of Winchester made in 13 Ed. I [c. 14] for preventing of robbery, murders, burning of houses, &c. Also the statute of 5 Ed. III [c. 14] which 'recites' the statute of Winchester, and that there had been divers manslaughters, felonies, and robberies done in times past, by people that be called *Roberdsmen*, wasters and draw-latches; and remedy [is] provided by that act for the arresting of them. At the parliament holden 50 Ed. III," he adds, "it was petitioned to the king that ribaunds and sturdy beggars might be banished out of every town. The answer of the king in parliament was, touching ribaunds: "the statute of Winchester and the declaration of the same with other statutes of *Roberdsmen*, and for such as make themselves gentlemen, and men of armes, and archers, if

* It appears to be a private plate—a small etching.

they cannot so prove theirselves, let them be driven to their occupation or service, or to the place from whence they came." He likewise notices the statutes of 7 R. II, [c. 5] by which it is provided "that the statutes of *Roberdsmen* and draw-latches be firmly holden and kept." (3 *Inst.* 197.) —*Ritson.*

(z) — "the honour of little John's death and burial is contended for by rival nations."] I. By England. At the village of Hathersage, about six miles from Castleton, in Derbyshire, is Little John's grave. A few years ago, some curious person caused it to be opened, when there were found several bones of an uncommon size, which he preserved; but, meeting afterward with many unlucky accidents, he carefully replaced them; partly at the intercession of the sexton, who had taken them up for him, and who had in like manner been visited by misfortunes: upon restoring the bones all these troubles ceased. Such is the tradition at Castleton.

[This anecdote is fully authenticated, and much better recorded, in the quotation in the preface from Mr. Hall's *Friendship's Offering.*]

E. Hargrove, in his *Anecdotes of Archery*, York, 1792, asserts, that the grave is distinguished by a large stone placed at the head, and another at the feet; on each of which are yet some remains of the letters J. L. (p. 26.)

II. By Scotland—"In Murray land," according to that most veracious historian, Maister Hector Boece, "is the kirke of Pette, quhare the banis of lytill Johne remanis in gret admiratioun of pepill. He hes bene fourtene feet of hycht with square membris effering thairto. Vi. zeris," continues he, "afore the cumyng of this werk to lycht, we saw his hanche-bane, als mekill as the haill bane of ane man; for we schot our arme in the mouth thairof. Be

quhilk apperis how strong and square pepill grewe in our regioun afore they were effeminat with lust and intemperance of mouth."

III. By Ireland. "There standeth," as Stanihurst relates, "in Ostmantowne greene an hillocke, named Little John his shot. The occasion," he says, "proceeded thus:

"In the yeare 1139 there ranged three robbers and outlaws in England, among which Robert Hood and Little John were cheefetenes, of all theeves doubtlesse the most courteous. Robin Hood being betrayed at a nunrie in Scotland, called Bricklies, the remnant of the crew was scattered, and everie man forced to shift for himselfe. Whereupon Little John was faine to flee the realme by sailing into Ireland, where he sojourned for a few daies at Dublin. The citizens being doone to understand the wandering outcast to be an excellent archer, requested him hartilie to trie how far he could shoot at random; who, yielding to their behest, stood on the bridge of Dublin, and shot to that mole-hill, leaving behind him a monument, rather by his posteritie to be woondered, than possiblie by anie man living to be counterscored. But as the repaire of so notorious a champion to anie countrie would soone be published, so his abode could not be long concealed:—and therefore to eschew the danger of [the] laws, he fled to Scotland, where he died at a towne or village called Moravie." Thus far Stanihurst, who is quoted by Dr. Hanmer in his *Chronicle of Ireland*, p. 179: but Mr. Walker, after observing that "poor Little John's great practical skill in archery could not save him from an ignominious fate," says, "it appeared, from some records in the Southwell family, that he was publicly executed for robbery on Arbor Hill, Dublin."—*Historical Essay, &c.* p. 129.—*Ritson.*

The Editor has endeavoured to illustrate these pages with cuts of as many of the localities relating to the persons and exploits of these foresters, as he could collect.

The cut at the commencement of Mr. Ritson's Life represents Robin Hood trimming his bow, according to a stanza in the *Legend of the Lytell Geste.*

> " Robyn stode on Bernysdale,
> And lened hym to a tree, &c."

Friar Tuck and Maid Marian speak for themselves. George a Green is fully described, as well as Kirklees Abbey, where Robin Hood is supposed to have been buried. The tail-piece now before the reader is a representation of Little John's house as it at present exists.

ROBIN HOOD,

HIS STATION AND CHARACTER IN ENGLISH HISTORY,

NEWLY DISCLOSED AND VINDICATED IN ARTICLES EXTRACTED FROM M. THIERRY'S "HISTORY OF THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND BY THE NORMANS," AND FROM THE "LONDON AND WESTMINSTER REVIEW;" WITH CURSORY COMMENTS BY THE PRESENT EDITOR.

ROBIN HOOD'S STATION AND CHARACTER IN HISTORY.

——" We may correct, erroneous oft,
The clock of history, facts and events
Timing more punctual, unrecorded facts
Recovering, and mis-stated setting right."
COWPER *to Yardley Oak.*

BEFORE commencing the extracts from the Review, in elucidation of the LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD, the Editor would state a few of the reasons, which induced him, after the perusal of Mr. Ritson's *Life*, and the article in the Review, to differ from him as to the date of Robin Hood's birth;—the place where he was

born;—the transactions in which he was probably engaged;—and the period of his death. An enquiry into these points is indispensably necessary, when taken in connexion with the contents of the *Lytell Geste;* which will be found so clearly to corroborate the hypotheses of M. Thierry,* and of the writer in the review.

Mr. Ritson begins his Life with stating, that "Robin Hood was born at Locksley in the county of Nottingham, in the reign of Henry the Second, and about the year of Christ 1160." And in two of his notes, he adds, "the name of such a town as *Locksley* or *Loxley,* (for so we sometimes find it spelled) in the county of Nottingham, or of York, does not, it must be confessed, occur either in Sir Henry Spelman's *Villare Anglicum,* in Adams's *Index Villaris,* in Whatley's *English Gazetteer,* in Thoroton's *History of Nottinghamshire,* or in the *Nomina Villarum Eboracensium* (York, 1768, 8vo.). The silence of these authorities is not, however, to be regarded as conclusive proof that no such a place ever existed. The names of towns and villages, of which no trace is now to be found but in ancient writings, would fill a volume."

In a second note, in allusion to the date of Robin Hood's birth, Mr. Ritson says; "Robin Hood," according to the Sloane MS. "was born in the days of Henry the Second, about the yeare 1160."

* History of the Conquest of England by the Normans, translated from the last Paris edition, published in Whittaker's popular Library of Modern Authors, 1841, pp. 236 et seq.

This was the sixth of that monarch's reign; at whose death (an. 1189) he would of course be about twenty-nine years of age.

"Those writers are therefore," continues Mr. Ritson, "pretty correct, who represent him as *playing his pranks* (Dr. Fuller's phrase) in the reign of King Richard the First; and according to the last-named author, about the year of our Lord 1200. Thus Major (who is followed by Stowe, *Annales* 1592, p. 227, "*circa hæc tempora* (sci. Ricardi I.) *ut auguror*, &c." A manuscript note in the Museum (*Bib. Har.* 1233) not in Mr. Wanley's opinion to be relied on, places him in the same period, "*Temp.* Rich. I." Nor is Fordun altogether out of his reckoning in bringing him down to the time of Henry III, as we shall hereafter see; and with him agrees that "noble clerk, maister Hector Boece;" who in the nineteeth chapter of his "threttene buke," says "about this tyme was that waithman Robert Hode with his fallow litil Johne, &c." (*History of Scotland*, Edin. 1541, folio.)

Mr. Spencer Hall, however, in his *Forester's Offering*, London, 1841, clearly settles Loxley in Yorkshire as the place of Robin Hood's birth, as follows:—

"Robin Hood, or as some authors have it, Robert o' th' Wood, was born at Loxley Chase, near Sheffield, in Yorkshire, where the romantic river Loxley descends from the hills to mingle its blue waters with the Rivilin, and the Don; a place well known to every grinder in Sheffield; and often alluded to in

the poems of the people's laureate, Ebenezer Elliott, who is the owner of some land on the spot;* but of which the last London editor of Ritson's Collection of Ballads could not tell the locality; and so, after an elaborate research, concluded that no place in that, or the neighbouring county of Nottingham, now retained the name."

The precise date of Robin Hood's birth cannot be arrived at so satisfactorily, as we seem thus to have done, at the place of it. But that assigned by Mr. Ritson is decidedly wrong, and much too early. Mr. Ritson, with a singular attempt at accuracy, "supposes him to have died on the 18th November 1247, being the 31st of Henry III, and in the eighty-seventh year of his age." His birth, therefore, according to his computation, must have been in 1160, the 6th of Henry II. This hypothesis, it will hereafter appear, is upset by the author of the article in *the London and Westminster Review*, as also by historical occurrences recorded in the *Legend of the Lytell Geste*. M. Thierry also considers that our hero was probably born in the reign of Richard I.

Having lived therefore twenty-nine years in Henry the Second's time; through the whole reign of

* Which scenery he thus describes :—

"Rock, vale and wood,—
Haunts of his early days, and still loved well;
And where the sun, o'er purple moorlands wide,
Gilds Wharncliffe's oaks, while Don is dark below;
And where the blackbird sings on Rother's side,
And where time spares the age of Conisbro'."

Richard the First, ten years; through that of King John, seventeen years; and in Henry the Third's reign, thirty-one years;—Mr. Ritson thus makes him eighty-seven years of age in 1247, when, he says, he died.

The greatest probability appears to the editor to be, that he was born early in Henry the Third's reign; no historian of any note having mentioned him before that period.

In Thoroton's *Nottinghamshire*, page 505, is some account, says Mr. Ritson, of the ancient and present state of Sherwood forest; but one looks in vain through that dry detail of landowners, for any particulars relating to our hero. "In anno Domini 1194, King Richard the First, being hunting in the forest of Sherwood, did chase a hart out of the forrest of Sherwood into Barnesdale in Yorkshire; and because he could not there recover him, he made proclamation at Tickill in Yorkshire, and at divers other places there, that no person should kill, hunt, or chase, the said hart, but that he might safely retorne into forrest againe; which hart was afterwards called a hart-royall proclaimed." (Manwood's *Forest Laws*, 1598, p. 25, from "an auncient recorde" found by him in the tower of Nottingham Castle.)

"Anno 1194. Vicesima nona die Martii Richardus rex Angliæ prefectus est videre Clipstone, et forestas de Sirewode, quas ipse nunquam viderat antea; et placuerunt ei multum, et eodem die reddidit ad Nottingham."—Rog. de Hoveden, *Annales*, p. 736.

May not the hypothetical dates of his birth and death therefore stand thus?

Fordun clearly shews him to have been living, and well known, about the time of the battle of Evesham, 1265; and in order to bring his name and fame as near as possible to the date of the legend, we will suppose him to have been in the prime of his life, forty years of age, at the period of that celebrated event. He may therefore have been born in 1225. That he survived the battle of Evesham, we learn from Fordun and other historical writers, and from the Legend; as also that he outlived Henry III; and according to the following stanza in the eighth Fytte of the *Lytell Geste*, after his return to his "woodland realme" at Barnsdale,—

"Robyn dwelled in greene wode
Twenty yere and two;
For all drede of Edward our Kynge
Again would not he go."

Edward the First began his reign in 1272; add therefore twenty-two years to 1272, and the date of his death is brought to 1294, making him sixty-nine years old, when he died. But Mr. Ritson and other authorities report him to have lived to the age of eighty-seven, bringing the date of his death eighteen years nearer to that of the *Legend of the Lytell Geste*.

From 1294, to the date of the earliest printed edition of the *Lytell Geste*, one by Wynkyn de Worde, probably in 1489, or of the Scotch edition of 1508, there would appear to be an hiatus of nearly two centuries of obscure or doubtful history in the

records of our hero; one and a half of which occurred before the introduction of printing in England.

It is to the legendary ballad of the *Lytell Geste* that we must chiefly refer for the most probable conjecture that can be formed of the period when Robin Hood lived, and the transactions in which he was engaged. There are few ancient ballads in existence, either in manuscript or in print, in which such a minute detail of occurrences is narrated, and of such historical accuracy. There are dates specified, or referred to, the best test of the accuracy of documentary evidence; and there are the names of individuals mixed up with these dates, whose existence, at the same period, is confirmed by national historians, whose fidelity is unquestioned.

But it is singular, that of a ballad consisting of nearly two thousand lines, not a vestige of any manuscript should have been discovered, from which the early editions of it were printed, so far as the editor's enquiries have gone. It is in vain, therefore, to affix a date to it, or to attempt to authenticate its writer.

The following is, perhaps, the best account of the various early printed editions, which at present are accessible, extracted from the second edition of Ritson's *Robin Hood*, edited by his nephew, and published by Mr. Pickering in 1832.

" This ancient ballad (that in Ritson's collection) is printed from the copy of an edition in 4to. and black letter, by Wynken de Worde, preserved in the public library at Cambridge; compared with, and in

some places corrected by, another impression (apparently from the former) likewise in 4to. and black letter, by William Copland; a copy of which is among the late Mr. Garrick's old plays, now in the British Museum. The full title of the first edition is as follows: 'Here beginneth a mery geste of Robin Hode and his meyne and of the proud sheryfe of Notyngham;' and the printer's colophon runs thus; 'Explycit. Kynge Edwarde and Robyn Hode and Lytell Johan. Emprinted at London in Flete strete at the sygne of the sone, By Wynken de Worde.' To Copland's edition is added, 'a newe playe for to be played in Maye games very plesaunte and full of pastyme'; no other copy of either edition is known to be extant; but, by the favour of the Reverend Dr. Farmer, the editor (Ritson) had in his hands, and gave to Mr. Douce, a few leaves of an old 4to. black letter impression, by the above Wynken de Worde, probably in 1489; and totally unknown to Ames and Herbert."

These leaves, with some of other editions in black letter, were bequeathed, with his library, &c. by Mr. Douce to the Bodleian, where the present editor has inspected them, and marked, in their proper places in this edition, every alteration or correction worthy of notice.

Another edition was printed at Edinburgh by Andrew Myllar and Walter Chapman in 1508, a fragment whereof is in the library there. This is probably the edition noticed among the tales enumerated in Wedderburn's *Complainte of Scotland*, printed

at St. Andrew's in 1549, under the title of *Robene Hude and litil Johne.*

A copy of this fragment, in the Advocates' library, has since issued from the Ballantyne press, published by the Messrs. Laing of Edinburgh, with other curious ancient romances and poems. To this fragment also the present editor has referred for emendations, &c.

The following is a facsimile of the head-piece to this edition.

The *Lytell Geste,* it is generally agreed, is the composition of a writer of the time of Chaucer; probably between the reigns of Richard II, 1377, and his successor, Henry IV, who died 1413. It may, therefore, be conjectured, that the ballad was written not later than from eighty to one hundred years after the death of Edward I, or that year of his reign, 1292, when the memorable lines before quoted occur in the *Lytell Geste.* That during this short space of time,

the exploits of so popular a character as Robin Hood should be held in remembrance, is not surprising; and another inference is admissible, that the first conjectured edition of the *Lytell Geste*, printed by Wynkyn de Worde 1489, may have been printed within a century of the date of the manuscript.

Fordun, the Scotch historian, as has been before remarked, who wrote about 1340, speaking of Robin Hood and Lytell John and their companions, says, "of whom the foolish vulgar in comedies and tragedies make lewd entertainment, and are delighted to hear the jesters and minstrels sing them above all other ballads."

The *Lytell Geste* is undoubtedly the earliest printed ballad relative to Robin Hood. "There was, however, a legend, says Mr. Ritson, apparently of the same species, of perhaps a still earlier date, of which it is some little satisfaction to be able to give even a fragment, from a single leaf, fortunately preserved in one of the volumes of old printed ballads in the British Museum, in a handwriting as old as Henry the Sixth's time, 1422 to 1461, exhibiting the characters of our hero and his *fidus Achates* in the noblest point of view." This fragment has since been found entire, and will appear in the second volume.

Our modern ballads, according to Hearne, are, for the most part, romantic; but the old ones contain matters of fact, and were generally written by good scholars. They were a sort of chronicles. So that the wise founder of New College permitted them to be sung, by the fellows and scholars of that college,

upon extraordinary days. Appendix to *Hemingi Chartularium*, p. 662.

Hearne refers for the last fact to "Statuto Coll. Novi, rubric XVIII, in which are the following words, "on the whole, it appears that the *cantilenæ* which the scholars should sing on those occasions, were a sort of *poemata*, or poetical chronicles, containing general histories of kingdoms. The same thing," he says, "is enjoined in the statutes of Winchester College, was afterwards adopted in the statutes of Magdalen College; and from them, if he recollects right, copyed into those of Corpus Christi, Oxford." (Ibid. 93.)

That the memory of the exploits of so popular a character as that of Robin Hood* should be kept alive in the legendary tales, ballads, and songs of this intervening period, is only one of the many instances through which tradition has handed down some of the most important events in history, and to which general credence is given, whether this arose through the agency of the "Minstrelle, the Harper, the Gleeman or the Jestour," in the dwellings of the great,

* In the first volume of Peck's intended supplement to the "Monasticon," consisting of collections from the history of Præmonstratensian monasteries, now in the British Museum, is a very curious rhyming Latin poem, with the following title: "Prioris Alnwicensis de bello Scotico apud Dunbarr, tempore regis Edwardi I dictamen sive rithmus Latinus quo de WILLIELMO WALLACE, Scotico illi ROBIN WHOOD, plura sed invidiose canit"—and in the margin are the following date and reference: "22 Julii, 1304. 32 E. 1. Regist. Prem. fol. 59, a." This, it may be observed, is the first known instance of our hero's name being mentioned by any writer whatever; and affords a strong and respectable proof of his early popularity.—Ritson's note to his Life. Let. P.

In which stooden all withouten,
Full the castle all abouten,
Of all manner of minstrales,
And jestours, that tellen tales
Both of weeping and of game,
And of all that longeth into fame.

CHAUCER'S *3rd Boke of Fame.*

It is almost unnecessary to refer for information on the value of traditionary history to the elaborate *Essay on Ancient Minstrels*, by Bishop Percy in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry;* the entire volumes in which it is contained being by their cheapness brought within the reach of every class of the reading public by "the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge;" yet the following passages are too pertinent not to be quoted.

"I cannot conclude this account of the ancient English minstrels," says Dr. Percy, "without remarking, that they are most of them represented to have been of the north of England. There is scarce an old historical song or ballad, wherein a minstrel or harper appears, but he is characterised by way of eminence to have been of 'THE NORTH COUNTRYE;' and indeed the prevalence of the northern dialect in such compositions shews, that this representation is real. On the other hand, the scene of the finest Scottish ballads is laid in the south of Scotland; which should seem to have been peculiarly the nursery of Scottish minstrels. In the old song of Maggy Lauder, a piper is asked by way of distinction, 'Come ȝe frae the Border?' The martial spirit constantly kept up and exercised near the frontier of the two kingdoms, as it furnished continual subjects for their songs, so it inspired the inhabitants of the adjacent counties on both sides with the powers of poetry. Besides, as our southern metropolis must have been ever the scene of novelty and refinement, the northern countries, as being the most distant, would preserve their ancient manners longer, and of course

the old poetry in which those manners are peculiarly described.

"The reader will observe in the more ancient ballads a cast of style and measure very different from that of contemporary poets of a higher class; many phrases and idioms which the minstrels seem to have appropriated to themselves, and a very remarkable license of varying the accent of words at pleasure, in order to humour the flow of the voice, particularly in the rhymes; as

countrè	harpèr	battèl	morning
ladè	singèr	damsèl	loving

instead of còuntry, làdy, hárper, sìnger, &c.

"This liberty is but sparingly assumed by the classical poets of the same age; or even by the later composers of heroical ballads, I mean by such as professedly wrote for the press. For it is to be observed, that as long as the minstrels subsisted, they seem never to have designed their rhymes for literary publication, and probably never committed them to writing themselves; what copies are preserved of them were doubtless taken down from their lips. But as the old minstrels gradually wore out, a new race of ballad-writers succeeded, an inferior sort of minor poets, who wrote narrative songs merely for the press. Instances of both may be found in the reign of Elizabeth.*

"The old minstrel ballads are in the northern dialect; abound with antique words and phrases; are extremely incorrect, and run into the utmost license of metre; they have also a romantic wildness, and are in the true spirit of chivalry. The

* The dearth of names in our poetical catalogue towards the middle of the fifteenth century, is not a proof that the art of poetry was at that time very little cultivated. The contrary, indeed, is most probably true; because many of the old ballads preserved in Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, several of the metrical romances, of which a large collection still remains in manuscript in our public libraries, and the greater part of the fabulous stories of Robin Hood, as well as the tales of Gamelyn and of Beryn, so long attributed to Chaucer, appear to belong to this period. (Henry VI, 1422.)—Ellis's *Specimens of English Poets*, vol. i. p. 351.

other sort are written in exacter measure, have a low or subordinate correctness, sometimes bordering on the insipid, yet often well adapted to the pathetic; these are generally in the southern dialect, exhibit a more modern phraseology, and are commonly descriptive of more modern manners."

And in a note the learned Doctor adds:

"Now that this order of men, at first called GLEEMEN, then JUGLERS, and afterwards more generally MINSTRELS, existed here from the Conquest, who entertained their hearers with chanting to the harp or other instruments, songs, and tales of chivalry, or as they were called GESTS and romances in verse, in the English language, is proved by the existence of the very compositions they so chanted, which are still preserved in great abundance; and exhibit a regular series from the time our language was almost Saxon, till after its improvements in the age of Chaucer, who enumerates many of them.

"Now hold your mouth *pour charite*,
Bothe knight and lady fre,
And herkeneth to my spell
Of bataille, and of chivalrie,
Of ladies love and druerie,
Anon I wol you tell.

"Men speken of romances of pris, (price)
Of Hornchild, and of Ipotis,
Of Bevis, and sire Guy,
Of sire Libeux, and Pleindamour,
But sire Thopas, he bereth the flour
Of real chevalrie."

CHAUCER'S *Rime of Sire Thopas.**

"Towards the end of Queen Elizabeth's reign the genuine old minstrelsy seems to have been extinct, and thenceforth, the ballads that were produced were wholly of the latter kind, and

* See further the conclusion of the *Squier's Tale*, Chalmers' edition, p. 84, 85; and for other account of the minstrels, note to Percy's *Essay*, p. cvi.-cvii. &c.

these came forth in such abundance, that in the reign of James I they began to be collected into little miscellanies under the name of GARLANDS, and at length to be written purposely for such collections."

The distinction drawn by Dr. Percy and others, between the language and rhymes of the *Lytell Geste*, and three or four of the earlier legends or ballads, and those ballads or songs of which the Robin Hood Garlands are composed, is remarkably striking, as is also the following account of the origin of our ballad literature.

"The uniformity of phraseology," says Mr. Motherwell, "in describing incidents of a similar nature, which pervades all our ancient ballads, might appear to argue a poverty both of expression and invention in these minstrel poets; but if the compositions were narratives of facts produced on the spur of the occasion, the use of such common-places becomes abundantly obvious. They not only assisted the memory in an eminent degree, but served as a kind of ground-work, on which the poem could be raised. With such common-places indelibly fixed in his memory, the minstrel or jugler could with ease to himself, and with the rapidity of extemporaneous delivery, readily model any event which came under his cognizance into song. They were like inns or baiting-places on a journey, from one to the other of which he could speedily transport himself.

That they were thus imitating the troubadours, jongleures, and cantadeurs, who in their wanderings sung or recited the poems and romances of the Provençals, there can be no doubt. The cantadours, called also chanterres, were clearly singers of songs and ballads; a full account of whom is given in Sir John Hawkins's *History of Music*, in a quotation from the *Lives of the Provençal Poets*, by Gio. Mario de Crescembeni, which Sir John thus concludes: 'Besides those enumerated by Nostrodamus, Alessandro Velutello reckons up many others who tra-

velled about and subsisted by the profession of minstrelsy, the nature whereof is described by Andrew Du Chesne in his notes on the works of Alain Chartier, where he cites from a romance written in the year 1230 the following lines:

"'Quand les tables ostées furent,
C'il juggleur in pies esturent,
S'ont vielles et harpes prises,
Chansons, sons, vers et reprises,
Et de gestes chanté nos ont.

"'When the tables were taken away,
The juglers stood up,
Took their lyres, and harps;
Songs, tunes, verses, and catches,
And exploits they sung to us.'

"The Provençal poets were not only the inventors and composers of metrical romances, songs, ballads and rhymes, to so great a number, and of such a kind, as to raise an emulation in most countries of Europe to imitate them; but, if we may credit the Italian writers, the best poets of Italy, namely, Petrarch and Dante, owed much of their excellence to the imitation of the Provençal; and it is farther said, that the greater part of the novels of Boccaccio are taken from Provençal or ancient French romances.

"These common-places," continues Mr. Motherwell, "became therefore the general outlines of every class of human incident and suffering then appropriated to song, and could be fitted easily to serve individual interest as circumstances might require, and that without any painful stretch of fancy or invention. Indeed the original of these common-places betokens no slender ingenuity on the part of these song inditers. They were like a commodious garment that could be wrapped expeditiously round every subject, of whatever nature or dimensions. Something of the same sort, though in a less marked degree, may be discovered in the construction of the longer metrical romances—all arguing that the composition of these pieces had been reduced to a certain system, and subjected to a peculiar mechanism necessarily

arising out of the circumstances under which they were produced, and the incessant craving of the popular taste for novel incident and fresh excitement. Besides these peculiar forms of expression, established epithets, and variety of common-places, another means of assisting the memory, and preserving the character of the melody unchanged, was adopted. This consisted in the burthens attached to the songs, many of which certainly in our day appear totally unmeaning and extravagant. But it is not unlikely that these 'stiff burdouns,' though abundantly curious and incomprehensible to us, had a significance, and were a key to a whole family of associations and feelings, of which we can form little or no conception.

"If we are to credit Jones (see his *Welsh Bards*), the common burden of 'Hey derry down' signified 'Let us hye to the Green Oak,' and was the burden of an old song of the Druids, sung by the bards inviting the people to their religious assemblies in the groves."

These extracts from Dr. Percy, Mr. Motherwell, and Sir John Hawkins, might be sufficient to establish the mode of conveying traditionary history before printing was invented, through the recitation of the minstrels; but as it is important to endeavour to authenticate, as far as possible, the veracity of the traditionary anecdotes and incidents in the legend of the *Lytell Geste* in relation to the life of Robin Hood, and especially the probable manner in which they have been preserved and handed down, since the period of his death to the date of the first printed edition of that legend, another testimony is adduced from a later, and equally as zealous a lover of ballad lore, as Dr. Percy.

The quotations which follow, are taken from a highly entertaining quarto volume entitled "Minstrelsy ancient and modern, with an historical intro-

duction and notes by William Motherwell, published at Glasgow, 1825;"—a work, from the slight notices taken of it by modern writers, not so well-known and appreciated as it deserves.

Mr. Motherwell, in his investigation of the peculiarities of the construction and idiom of some of our ancient ballads, remarks, "that many of them had certain frames in which they were set, and which like the chorus of the ancient drama, discussed the motives of the characters, or entered more minutely into their history, than was consistent with the limits and action of the metrical piece, and which derives corroboration from the fact, that a few of them still retain their initial stanzas as matters of an explanatory description."

This character, upon reference to the ballads in *Robin Hood's Garlands*, will be found frequently to occur, particularly in the initial stanzas to "Robin Hood and the Beggar;" "Robin Hood and the Bishop;" "Robin Hood's Chase;" "Robin Hood and the Bishop of Hereford," and some others, in which the names of the parties, or the subject of the ballad, are introduced; and acting on this principle, it would seem, that the writers and printers of our modern ballads have, in their introductory verses of these ditties, or in the formidable titles prefixed to them, endeavoured to communicate to the reader that information which the ancient minstrel in all probability announced orally to his audience, before he smote his harp with the hand of power.

"This is another feature," observes Mr. Mother-

well, "which the ancient ballads have in common with each other, and which constitutes a material distinction between them and those purposely written for the press. They are much more licentious and incorrect in their metres, according to the present standards of taste in these matters; the accent not unfrequently falls on syllables at variance with our present mode of pronunciation; and they have throughout the marks of a composition not meant to be committed to writing, but whose music formed an essential part of it, and from which it could not well be separated without essentially interfering with its unity, and injuring its effect. And indeed it is pretty evident, that many of them would require both the voice and instrument to be humoured, so as to conceal the many irregularities of measure and rhyme, or other accidental harshnesses into which the poet had fallen."

But one of the most striking and never varying features of these compositions is their agreement in describing certain actions in one common way; their identity of language, epithet, and expression in numerous scenes, where the least resemblances of incident occur. Instances of this fact are familiar as household words; and in none more so than in the series of Robin Hood ballads; in every one of which the identity of the hero, and of many of his companions, is never lost sight of.

"It would seem," continues Mr. Motherwell, "that these common-places are so many ingenious devices, no doubt suggested by the wisdom and experience of

many ages, whereby oral poetry is more firmly imprinted on the memory, more readily recalled to it, when partially obliterated, *and in the absence of letters, the only efficacious means of preserving and transmitting it to after ages.* Besides, it is in them we not unfrequently recognize those epithets and allusions, which carry the compositions to which they appertain to a remote age; epithets and allusions to which the writer of modern times does not and cannot well attach any distinct meaning, but which he repeats as he gets them, because he finds they occur in all such songs as uniformly as its burthen of 'derry-down, down, dey derry-down.'*

"In no modern, or comparatively modern, ballad do they ever present themselves, except in a few, which may be considered as framed on the ancient models, or in those which immediately succeeded to the ancient ones, whose features in part they must have retained, in order to win their way to popular or vulgar favour."

These remarks upon the manner and the means through which tradition has handed down to us some of the most important events in the early periods of British history, and in the truth of which we place implicit reliance, may appear, perhaps, to those who have made historical romance and ballad literature their peculiar study, to have been carried to an unnecessary length. But it is not such persons alone,

* Mr. Macauley has, as he thinks, brought back to its ancient ballad form the Roman history, to that ballad form from which Livy received it. See Macauley's *Ballads.*

amongst whom the tales of Robin Hood have become popular, or their origin or his character been understood. There is another class of students and readers rapidly increasing, amongst whom the dissemination of that correct historical information is desirable, which the research of the antiquary has brought to light, and which may remove many prejudices and opinions, that have led to the belief that Robin Hood was nothing better than "the prince of robbers," and "the gentlest of thieves."

But even with several learned and enlightened antiquaries and archæologists the legend of *A Lytell Geste of Robin Hood* is still considered more in the light of an heroic tale or romance, than as an historical ballad, disclosing transactions in the life of the hero, which, when corroborated, as they are, by similar events circumstantially narrated in our old chronicles and memorials of ancient enterprise, give them the impress of authenticity and truth. Nor will it henceforth be more than an act of justice in Robin Hood's countrymen to consider him no longer as an outlaw or robber, but henceforth to elevate him in their estimation, and to characterize him as the bold, independent, kind-hearted, but oppressed English yeoman, associated with the barons his superiors in redressing their country's wrongs, and fighting for those charters of their liberties, of which they had been so frequently despoiled by the tyranny and treachery of the monarchs who ruled over them.

Mr. Ritson, in his life of Robin Hood, while designating him as the prince of robbers, and an outlaw,

certainly adduces some circumstances in palliation of his predatory life on the plea of necessity.

"It is not at the same time to be concluded," says Mr. Ritson, "that he must, in this opposition, have been guilty of manifest treason or rebellion; as he most certainly can be justly charged with neither. An outlaw in those times being deprived of protection, owed no allegiance, 'his hand was against every man, and every man's hand was against him.'* These forests, in short, were his territories; those who accompanied and adhered to him, his subjects.

"The world was not his friend, nor the world's law: and what better title King Richard could pretend to the territory and people of England than Robin Hood had to the dominion of Barnsdale or Sherwood, is a question humbly submitted to the consideration of the political philosopher."

---

* In vindication of this doctrine of the subjugation of all law, and of anarchy and confusion, Mr. Ritson subjoins the following note.

"An outlaw, in those times, being deprived of protection, owed no allegiance, &c." Such a character was, doubtless, at the period treated of, in a very critical situation; it being equally as legal and meritorious to hunt down and dispatch him, as it was to kill a wolf, the head of which animal he was to bear. "Item forisfacit," says Bracton (who wrote about this time), "omnia que pacis sunt, quia a tempore quo utlagatus est CAPUT GERIT LUPINUM, ita ut impune ab omnibus interfici possit." (l. ii. c. 35.) In the great Roll of the Exchequer, in the 7th year of Richard I, is an allowance by writ, of two marks to Thomas de Prestwude, for bringing to Westminster the head of William de Elleford, an outlaw. (See Madox's *History of the Exchequer*, 136). Those who received or consorted with such a person were subject to the same punishment. Such was the humane policy of our enlightened ancestors!—Note L, Ritson's edition.

After offering these extenuating circumstances in Robin Hood's behalf, it is singular that a commentator and critic of Mr. Ritson's acumen should neither in his life of him, nor in any introductory remarks to the *Lytell Geste*, which stands the foremost and most interesting tale in his Robin Hood's collection, have considered it of any greater value than the common Garland ballads which follow; or that he did not discover, that it contained occurrences of much higher and truer import, than the fictions of a mere historical romance. Mr. Ritson neither particularizes, compares, nor unites Robin Hood with the many well authenticated public personages, who bear so conspicuous a part in the narration in the *Lytell Geste;* the "Abbot of St. Mary's;" the far-famed "Sheriff of Nottingham;" "Sir Richard at the Lee," the knight to whom Robin Hood generously lent four hundred pounds; and more especially the estimation in which Robin Hood was held by his gracious sovereign "Edward I," both when prince and king; who deigned to make him both boon companion and friend.

With such materials for the compilation of facts, as well or better authenticated than many at the same period in British history, it seems unaccountable that Mr. Ritson should have contented himself with so meagre a Life, and should have excused himself by saying, "it will scarcely be expected that one should be able to offer an authentic narrative of the life and transactions of this extraordinary personage. The times in which he lived, the mode of life he adopted,

and the silence or loss of cotemporary writers, are circumstances sufficiently favourable, indeed, to romance, but altogether inimical to historical truth." What, however, Mr. Ritson has not achieved, the anonymous writer in the London and Westminster Review and M. Thierry have happily accomplished; dilating at the same time, at considerable length, upon the domestic and civil economy of our ancestors, their public and private sports, the entertainments of the baronial hall and the woodland glade, the alternate solemnities and buffooneries of misdirected devotion, and those pastimes and amusements which relieve the toils of life, and give zest to the labour of the humbler classes.

To render the new account of the life of Robin Hood, and the vindication of his character and rank in society as complete as is in his power, the editor will next proceed to extract those passages from M. Thierry's *History of the Norman Conquest*, which seem first to have arrested the attention of the writer in the *London and Westminster Review*.

It is hardly necessary to allude to the obligations which this country owes to the distinguished foreigner M. Thierry, for the light he has thrown upon early events in British history. The works of Thierry, Sismondi, and Mignet, are now held with us in the same estimation, and are placed on the same shelves, as those of Turner and Hallam, of Southey and Smyth.*

* Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, author of "Lectures on Modern History," 1840, &c. &c.

"M. Thierry," it has been justly remarked by an able critic, "is an author of rare occurrence. His productions have acquired a European reputation, and in the phrase of the day, have exercised a powerful influence upon the science of literature. Hardly, indeed, could a Benedictine monk have delved more diligently in the deep mine of mediæval antiquity. Animated, and yet steadily laborious, his invention is constantly stimulated by the monotonous chronicle, and the mouldering charter."

M. Thierry's first allusion to the predatory state of society which existed in England during the Norman Conquest, is in book v headed with the following contents: "From the formation of the Camp of Refuge in the Isle of Ely, to the execution of the last Saxon Chieftain."

"A.D. 1070 to 1076.

"As to the Anglo-Saxons, who would not or could not emigrate," he says, "many of them sought refuge in the forests with their families, and, if they were rich and powerful, with their servants and their vassals.*

"The great roads along which the Norman convoys passed were infested by their armed bands; and they took back from the conquerors by stratagem what the conquerors had taken by force; thus recovering a ransom of their inheritance, or avenging by assassination the massacre of their fellow-countrymen.† These refugees are called brigands by the historians friendly to the Conquest;‡ who speak of them in their accounts as of men

* Cum familiâ suâ ad sylvas fugientibus. (Math. Paris, Vitæ Abbat. S. Albani, i. 29.)

† Pro amissis patrum suorum prædia et occisis parentibus et compatriotis. (Orderic. Vital. p. 512.)

‡ Latrones, latrunculi, sicarii.

wilfully and wickedly armed against a lawful order of society. 'Each day,' say they, 'was committed a number of thefts and murders, caused by the natural villany of the people and the immense riches of the kingdom.'* But the native population considered they had a right to make the recapture of riches which had been taken from themselves, and, if they became robbers, it was for no other purpose than to recover their own property. The social order which they rose against, and the law which they violated, had no sanctity in their estimation; and thus the English word outlaw,† synonymous with banished man, robber, bandit, or brigand, thenceforward lost its disgraceful signification, and was employed by the conquered people in a more favourable light. Old narratives and legends, and the popular romances of the English, have shed a kind of poetic tint on the character of the bold outlaw, and over the wandering and unrestrained life he led in the green woods and glades.‡ In those romances the outlawed individual is always portrayed as the gayest and bravest of men;§ he is the king of the forest, and fears not the king of the country.‖

"The north country especially, which had most obstinately resisted the invaders, became the land of the wanderers in arms, the last mode of protest against power by the vanquished.¶ The vast forests in the province of York were the haunt of a numerous band, who had for their chief a man named Sweyn, son of Sigg.** In the midland counties, and near London, even

* Propter immensas regni hujus divitias, et propter innatam indigenis crapulam. (Lelandi Collectanea, p. 42.)

† Or ut-lage; the Anglo-Saxon orthography. In Latin, utlagus.

‡ Mery and free
Under the leves green.
(Ancient Ballads of Robin Hood.)

§ A more mery man than I am one
Lives not in Cristianté. (Ritson's Robin Hood.)

‖ Ibid.

¶ Monast. Anglican. i. 381.

** Quidam princeps latronum. (Hist. Monasterii Selebiensis, apud Labbe, nova biblioth. MSS. i. 603.)

under the walls of the Norman castles, various bands were also formed of these men, who, say the chroniclers of that age, rejecting slavery to the last, made the wolds their abiding place.* Their encounters with the conquerors were always sanguinary, and when they appeared in any inhabited place, it was a pretext for the foreigner to redouble his oppressions therein; he punished the unarmed men for the mischief done to him by those in arms; and these again, in their turn, sometimes made terrible visits to those whom the vulgar opinion marked out as friends of the Normans. Thus perpetual terror reigned throughout the country; for to the danger of falling by the sword of the foreigner, who considered himself as a demi-god among brutes, and understood neither the prayers, nor the arguments, nor the excuses preferred in the language of the conquered people, was also added that of being regarded as traitors to their native land, or of being suspected to be such, by the independent Saxons, who were as much maddened by their despair as the Normans were by their pride.† Thus no Englishman would venture even into the neighbourhood of his own dwelling; but every Englishman who had taken the oath of peace and delivered hostages to the Conqueror, kept his house barred and fortified like a town in a state of siege.‡ It was filled with arms of every kind, with bows and arrows, axes, maces, heavy iron forks, and daggers; and the doors were bolted and barricaded. When the hour of rest arrived, at the time of making all fast, the head of the family repeated aloud the prayers in that age used at sea on the approach of a storm, and said, 'The Lord bless and help us;' to which all present answered, 'Amen.'§

---

* Jugum renuentibus servitutis. (Math. Paris, Vita Abbatum S. Albani, i. 29.)

† Vecordes è superbiâ efficiebantur. (Orderic. Vital. lib. iv. apud Script. Rer. Normann. p. 523.

‡ Domus cujuslibet pacifici quasi municipium obsidendum. (Math. Paris, Vitæ Abbat. S. Albani, i. 46.)

§ Preces quasi imminente in mari tempestate. (Ibid.)

This custom existed in England for more than two centuries after the Conquest."*

The following extracts from M. Thierry's History more immediately relate to our hero, Robin Hood.

As the editor has before remarked, M. Thierry carries the exploits of Robin Hood as far back as the reign of Richard the First.

"After his victory at Nottingham," he says, "King Richard, wishing for recreation, made a journey into the largest forest of England, extending from Nottingham to the centre of the county of York, over a space of several hundred miles, and called by the Saxons *Sire-wode*, which in course of time was changed into *Sherwood*. 'He had never in his life seen these forests,' says a contemporary narrator, 'and they pleased him extremely.'† The charm of picturesque scenery and of the open country, especially to those who have been long deprived of their liberty, has been felt in all ages; and to this natural attraction might be added another, which was quite peculiar, and perhaps yet more congenial, to the adventurous spirit of Richard Cœur-de-Lion. The forest of Sherwood was at that time a terror to the Normans; it was the habitation of the last remnant of the bands of armed Saxons, who, still denying the Conquest, voluntarily persisted in living out of the law of the descendants of foreigners. Everywhere hunted, pursued, tracked like wild beasts, it was here alone that, owing to the nature of the country, they had been able to maintain themselves in numbers, and under a sort of military organization, which gave them a character more respectable than that of vulgar highwaymen."

---

* Quæ consuetudo usquè ad nostra tempora perduravit. (Math. Paris, loco citato.)

† Profectus est videre forestas de Sire-wode, quas ipse nunquàm viderat antea, et placuerunt ei multùm. (Rog. de Hov. p. 736.)

M. Thierry then particularly alludes to Robin Hood by name.

(A.D. 1139-1194.) "About the time that this heroic prince, the pride of the Norman barons, visited the forest of Sherwood, there dwelt under the shade of that celebrated wood a man who was the hero of the serfs, the poor and the obscure, or, in one word, of the Anglo-Saxon race. 'Then,' says an old historian, 'arose among the disinherited, the famous brigand Robert Hode, whom the common people are so fond of celebrating in their games and stage-plays; and whose exploits, chanted by strolling ballad-singers, delight them above all things.'* This short passage is all that the chronicles positively say of the most celebrated Saxon that had chosen Hereward† for his model. And in order to find some particulars of the life of this most extraordinary man, we must necessarily have recourse to the old romances and popular ballads. Little faith can, perhaps, be attached to the whimsical and often contradictory facts related in those national poems;‡ yet they furnish incontestable evidence of the ardent friendship of the English people for the bandit chief whom they celebrate, and for his companions, who, instead of ploughing the glebe for imperious masters, ranged through Sherwood, gay, blithe and free, according to the old and admired ballads.§

"It can hardly be doubted that Robert, or more vulgarly, Robin Hood, was of Saxon birth; his French prenomen proves nothing against this opinion; for, already, in the second gene-

---

* Hoc in tempore de exhæredatis surrexit ille famosissimus sicarius Robertus Hode, cum ejus complicibus, de quibus stolidum vulgus hiantur in comœdiis festum faciunt, et super cæteras romancias mimos et bardanos cantitare delectantur. (Johan. de Fordun, Scotichron. p. 774.)

† Vide book v. p. 104.

‡ Is it possible that some of Punch's exploits with the Sheriff and Justice, may have a reference remote and altered to the geste of Robin Hood?—(*Editor.*)

§ We range the forest mery and free.

(Ancient Songs of Robin Hood.)

44794

ration since the Conquest, the influence of the Norman priests had caused the ancient baptismal names to fall into disuse, and the names of saints and other Norman Christian names to be generally adopted. Hood is a Saxon name; and the most ancient ballads rank the ancestors of him who bore it in the class of the English peasantry.* Afterwards, when the remembrance of the great revolution effected by the Conquest was weakened, the village poets thought fit to deck out their favourite hero in the pomp of riches and greatness; they made him an earl, or the supposed grandson of an earl, whose daughter, having been seduced, fled from home, and was delivered in a wood. The latter supposition gave rise to a popular romance, full of interest and of graceful ideas, but unauthorised by any probability.† Whether it be true or false that Robin Hood was born, as this romance tells us, 'in the green wood among flowering lilies,' he passed his life in the woods, at the head of several hundred archers, who became the dread of the earls, viscounts, bishops, and rich abbots of England, but were cherished by the farmers, the labourers, the widows, and the poor. They granted peace and protection to all who were weak and oppressed; shared with them who had nothing the spoils of those who fattened on the crops which others had sown; and, according to the old tradition, did good to every honest and laborious person.‡ Robin Hood was the stoutest heart and the best man to draw a

---

* I shall tell you of a good yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode. (Ancient Songs.)

† O Willie 's large o' limb and lith,
And come o' high degree;
And he is gone to Earl Richard,
To serve for meat and fee.

Earl Richard had but ae daughter,
Fair as a lily flower. . . .
(Jamieson's Popular Songs, II. 24.)

‡ From wealthy abbots' chests and churches' abundant store,
What oftentimes he took, he shar'd amongst the poor.
(Robert Brunnes' Chronicle, II. 667, edit. Hearne.)

bow of all his band; and after him was quoted Little John, his lieutenant and brother in arms, from whom, in danger as well as in rejoicing, he never parted, and from whom in like manner he is never separated by the English ballads and proverbs.* Tradition still mentions some other of his companions, as Much, the miller's son, old Scathlocke, and a monk, called Friar Tuck, who fought in his gown, and used no other weapon than a good cudgel.† They were all of right merry humour, having no view to riches, plundering but to live, and distributing their superfluities among the poor families dispossessed of their tenures during the great pillage of the Conquest. Though hostile to the rich and powerful, they did not slay those who fell into their hands, nor ever shed blood but in their own defence.‡ They rarely assailed any other than the agents of the royal police, and the governors of the cities or of the provinces, whom the Normans called viscounts, and the English termed sheriffs:

> "But bend your boes and strok your strings,
> Set the gallows tree aboute,
> And Christe's curse on his head, said Robin,
> That spares the sheriff and the sergeant."§

The sheriff of Nottingham was he against whom Robin Hood had the oftenest to fight, and who pressed him the most vigorously, with foot and horse, setting a price on his head, and inciting his friends and companions to betray him. No man ever betrayed him; but many assisted him in retreating from the dangers into which his boldness frequently led him. A poor woman once said to him, 'I would rather die than not do my utmost to save thee; for who has fed and clothed me and my children, but thou and Little John.'‖

---

* Robin Hood and Little John. (Camden's Remains.)

† With cowl and quarter staff.

‡ Annales, or a General Chronicle of England, by J. Stow, p. 159, 1631.

§ Jamieson's Popular Songs, II. 52.

‖ The Life of Robin Hood.

"The surprising adventures of this chief of bandits of the twelfth century, his victories over the men of foreign race, his stratagems and escapes, were long the only stock of national history that a plain Englishman of those ages transmitted to his sons, after receiving it from his forefathers. The popular imagination attached to Robin Hood, as if an ideal personage, every qualification and every virtue of the middle ages. He was reputed to have been as devout at church as he was brave in combat; and it was said of him, that when he had once entered to hear the service, whatsoever danger might occur, he never went away until it was finished.* This devotional scruple once exposed him to be taken by the sheriff and his men-at-arms; but still he found means to make a resistance; and the old history even tells us, though a little suspected of exaggeration, that on this very occasion Robin Hood took the sheriff.† On this theme the English ballad-singers of the fourteenth century composed a long ballad; a few stanzas of which are worthy to be quoted, if only as an instance of the lively and animated colouring which the people give to their poetry in ages when literature is highly popular:—

In somer, when the shawes be sheyn,
And leaves be large and long,
Hit is full mery in fayre forest,
To hear the fouly's song;

To se the dere draw to the le,
And leve their hillis hee,
And shadow hem in the leves greene,
Under the greenwood tree.

Hit befel on Whitsontyde,
Erly in a May morning;
The sun up feyre can spring that day,
And the birddes mery gan sing.

---

* De quo quædam commendabilia recitantur; missam devotissimè audiret, nec aliquâ necessitate volebat interrumpere officium. (Johan. de Fordun. Scotichron. p. 774.)

† Ibid.

This is a mery morning, said Littill John,
By him that dyed on tree;
And more mery men than I am one,
Was not in Christanté.

Pluk up thy hert, my dere mayster,
Littill John gan say,
And think it is a full fayre time
In a morning of May.

The on thing greves me, sayd Robyn,
And does my hert mych woe,
That I may not, no solemn day
To mas ne matyns go.

Hit is a fourtnet and more, sayd Robyn,
Syn I my Savor see
* * * * *
With the myght of mylde Mary.

Then Robyn goes to Nottingham;
He goes into St. Mary's chyrche,
And kneyld before the rode,*
* * * * *

"Not only was Robin Hood renowned for his devotion to the saints and to holydays; he himself had his annual festival, similar to a saint's day; and on that day, kept religiously by the inhabitants of the hamlets and small towns of England, none were permitted to employ themselves in any thing but pastime and pleasure. In the fifteenth century this custom was still observed; and the descendants of the Saxons and the Normans shared these popular diversions in common, without reflecting that they were a monument of the ancient hostility of their forefathers. On that day the churches were deserted as well as the workshops; no saint, no preacher, had greater prescription than Robin Hood on his feast; and its observance lasted even after the Reformation had lent a new stimulus to religious zeal in England. This fact is attested by a Church of

* Jamieson's Popular Songs, ii. 34.

England bishop of the sixteenth century, the celebrated and venerable Latimer. In one of his pastoral visitations, he arrived in the evening at a small town near London, and gave notice that he should preach the next day, because it was a holyday. 'When I came there,' says he, 'the churche's door was fast locked; I tarried there half an hour and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parishioners comes to me, and sayes, Syr, this a busye day with us; we cannot heare you; it is Robin Hoode's day; the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hoode.'* Latimer had already put on his episcopal gown, but was obliged to take it off, and go forward on his way, leaving the place to the archers, dressed in green, who were enacting in a shady spot the parts of Robin Hood, Little John, and all the band.†

"Traces of the long-cherished recollection, which superseded in the breasts of the English people even the memory of the Norman invasion, are at this day still existing. There is in the province of York, at the mouth of a small river, a bay, which in all the modern maps, bears the name of Robin Hood;‡ and in the same province, near Pontefract, there was shewn to travellers a short time since a spring of clear water, which was called Robin Hood's Well;§ and of which they were invited to drink, in honour of the famous archer. During the whole of the seventeenth century, the old ballads of Robin Hood, printed in black letter, a type then greatly admired by the people, circulated in the villages of England, where they were hawked about by men who sang them in a kind of recitative.‖ Several complete collections were made for the use of readers in towns; and one of these compilations bore the elegant title of *Robin Hood's*

* Sermon VI. before King Edward VI. Latimer's Sermons, 1584, p. 74.

† To give place to Robin Hoode's-men. (Ritson's Collection, I. cvii.)

‡ Robin Hood's Bay. (Hawkins' History of Music, iii. 411.)

§ Evelyn's Diary. It still bears the same title.

‖ Hawkins' History of Music, iii. 410.

Garland. These collections, now become scarce, are consulted by men of erudition, whilst the history of the heroes of Sherwood, despoiled of all poetical ornament, has lapsed into a tale for the nursery.

"None of the tales that have been handed down to our time relate the death of Robin Hood. The vulgar tradition is that he perished in the following manner. Upon his resorting to a convent for medical aid in sickness, it was proposed to bleed him; and the nun who was able by practice to perform that operation, having accidentally recognized him, did it in such a manner that it caused his death.* This account, the truth of which can neither be affirmed nor contested, is quite conformable to the manners of the twelfth century. In the wealthy convents in that age many women employed themselves in studying medicine and compounding remedies, which they dispensed gratuitously to the poor. Besides, in England, since the Conquest, the abbesses and the greater part of the nuns were of Norman extraction, as is proved by their statutes, drawn up in old French;† which circumstance perhaps explains how it was that the chief of Saxon banditti, whom the royal ordinances had placed *out of the law*, found enemies in the nunnery where he had gone to seek assistance. After his death, the troop, of which he was the leader and the soul, dispersed; and his faithful companion Little John, despairing of making a stand in England, and impelled by the desire of continuing the war against the Normans, went to Ireland, and engaged in the revolts of the natives of that country.‡ Thus was dissolved the last band of English robbers that has had, in any way, a political object and character, and has thereby deserved a mention in history.

(A.D. 1100 to 1200.) "Between the refugees of the camp of Ely and the men of Sherwood, between Hereward and Robin

* Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry. i. 198, sixth edition.

† Regulæ monialium B. Mariæ de Southwelle. (Matth. Paris, i. 261.)

‡ Hanmer's Chronicle of Ireland, p. 179.

Hood, there had been, especially in the north of England, a succession of partisan chiefs and outlaws, who, like them, were not without celebrity, but of whom too little is known for them to be considered as historical personages. The names of some of them, as Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough (or Clement of the Valley), and William of Cloudesly, were long retained in the popular memory.* The adventures of these three men, who can no more be separated from one another, than Robin Hood and Little John, are the subject of a long romance, composed in the fifteenth century, and divided into three parts or cantos. There is not much faith to be attached to the particulars it contains; but we find in it many original traits, capable of communicating more forcibly to the reader the idea which the population of English race had formed of the moral character of those men who, in the ages of the national enlargement, chose rather to be bandits than slaves.

"These men," says M. Thierry in another part of his work, "took as much pride in the title of *outlaw*, as, in a free nation, is attached to that of *citizen*. History names them not; she has passed them over in silence; or, following the language of the legal acts decreed by the conquering race, she has branded them with epithets which take from them all interest,—with the names of *rebel*, *traitor*, *robber*, *bandit*.† But let us not be imposed on by these titles odious in appearance; they are those which, in every country under foreign subjection, have been borne by the few brave men who, while the rest of their nation submitted to the chain, have taken up their abode in the mountains and deserts, leaving the cities to the *slaves*. Such as had not the courage to follow these brave men's example, would accompany them with their wishes;—and to return to England —while ordonnances drawn up in the French language were prescribing to every inhabitant of the towns and villages to track the outlaw,—the *forester*, like a wolf, and pursue him with *hue*

* Ballads of Robin Hood, Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, &c.

† The Normans sometimes used the Saxon word *utlages*, and sometimes the word *forestiers*.

and cry from hamlet to hamlet, from hundred to hundred, English songs were circulating in honour of this enemy to the foreign power, whose treasury was said to be the court's purse, and his flock the king's deer. The popular poets of the time celebrated his victories, his combats, his stratagems, against the self-styled guardians of the public safety—how he had tired out the viscount's men and horses in pursuit—how he had taken the bishop, redeemed him for a thousand marks, and made him dance a measure in his pontifical habits.

" If Robin Hood was the last chief of Anglo-Saxon banditti, or outlaws, that enjoyed a real popular celebrity, this is no reason for believing that, after him, no man of the same race ever more embraced the same kind of life, in the same spirit of political hostility to the government exercised by men of foreign race and language. The national struggle must still have been protracted under the form of plunder and robbery; and the two ideas of a free man, and an enemy to the law, long remained associated. But this had its termination; and in proportion as the period of the Conquest became more remote, in proportion as the English race, growing accustomed to the yoke, became attached by habit to that which it had tolerated from despair, plunder gradually lost its patriotic sanction, and re-descended to its natural level, that of an infamous profession. Thenceforward, the condition of bandit in the forests of England, though no less perilous, and still requiring no less of individual courage and address, created no longer any acknowledged heroes. Only there remained in the avowed sentiments of the inferior classes a great indulgence for infractions of the laws of the chase, and a marked sympathy for all those who, either from necessity or from pride, set those laws of the Conquest at defiance. The life of the adventurous poacher, and the forest life in general, are celebrated with fervour in a multitude of songs and poetical pieces, of which some are recent. In these, independence is constantly named among the pleasures enjoyed in the green wood,*

* Under the good greenwood tree
In the good greenwood.
(Pieces of ancient popular poetry.)

where there is no enemy but winter and the storm,* where the heart is gay the whole day long, and the spirit light as the leaf on the tree."†

After the perusal of these extracts relative to Robin Hood from the *History of the Conquest of England by the Normans*, by a foreign historian so eminent and faithful as M. Thierry, corroborated as his history is by reference to the works of some of our earliest and best English historians, it would have been strange, if some writer of the present day on ballad literature, had not availed himself of such a copious store of information, and produced therefrom a more authentic narrative of the life and actions of Robin Hood and his companions. This has been well done by the writer of an article, under the signature of G. F., in Vol. xxxiii. No. 65, of the *London and Westminster Review;* and the compiler of the present volumes was most anxious to have obtained permission from him to make a more free use than he has of the new history, and vindication there developed, of the life and character of Robin Hood;—of the events of the times in which he lived, and which led to the predatory life usually ascribed to him. But though he has every reason to believe, that two letters (the latter addressed to the writer with his real name and residence) containing such a request, and stating the use in-

---

* The season's difference
And churlish chiding of the winter's wind.
(Shakspere, As You like It, act ii. sc. 1.)

† Mery and free,
As happy as the day is long, as leaf on lynde.
(Ancient Popular Songs.)

tended to be made of the article, in all probability, reached him, no reply has been made to either.

The editor trusts, therefore, that after such an application, he will neither be considered guilty of plagiarism, nor have subjected himself to the penalties of the Copyright Act; but that in palliation of the freedom about to be taken, he may put forward the plea, without derogating from the ability which the writers in this review display upon every subject relating to our early poetry, the drama, and our ballad literature in particular, that by making copious extracts from the article on Robin Hood, the writer's opinions are likely to be more extensively known, and to obtain perpetuity, than in the fleeting and miscellaneous pages of a periodical.

EXTRACTS FROM THE LONDON AND WESTMINSTER REVIEW, No. LXV. MARCH 1840, ELUCIDATORY OF

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF ROBIN HOOD.

OUT of monuments, names, wordes, proverbs, traditions, private recordes and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of bookes, and the like, we doe save and recover somewhat from the deluge of time.
LORD BACON, *on the Advancement of Learning*, book II.

IT is encouraging, in the research into matters of history, and the ascertainment of dates, when the inquirer finds his opinions corroborated by those who have been previously engaged in similar pursuits. Such a pioneer the editor has found in the writer of the article in the above-mentioned Review, who has undoubtedly discovered sufficient authority and reason to assign to Robin Hood a higher station in society than has commonly been given to him.

"Whatever light," says this writer, "has hitherto been thrown upon a subject assuredly national and popular, if ever subject were so, is chiefly due to a sagacious foreigner, M. Augustin Thierry, who, in his admirable *Histoire de la Conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands*, has made the nearest approximation that any modern writer yet has done, to a just view of Robin Hood's historical character and popularity.

"Until M. Thierry was led to examine the matter, in tracing the protracted operation of the conquest upon the social condition of the Anglo-Saxon population, the highest estimate which the great northern outlaw could ever obtain was that of having been 'the gentlest of thieves,' the most magnanimous as well as dexterous of poachers and highwaymen. Yet, surely, it should sooner have occurred to the historical investigator, that some

higher claim to heroic sympathy than that of the deer-stealer, however successful, or the bandit, however generous, must have been requisite to make a man for ages the Achilles of a popular Iliad, the Cid of an English *romancero;* and that something it is, that we shall here endeavour to exhibit historically to our readers.

"The Latin chroniclers of England, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, occupied almost exclusively with another class of heroes, give us little direct insight into the political and social circumstances of the celebrated outlaw chieftain. But the Scottish writers of the same period, for reasons which will hereafter appear, were disposed to entertain a greater sympathy, or at any rate much less contempt, for a popular hero of the north of England. Thus, in the great work left incomplete by John of Fordun, who, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, laid the foundations of modern Scottish history, we find a considerable passage respecting Robin Hood, which is importantly significant, and which, corroborated as it is by the oldest and longest of the metrical narratives concerning him, appears to us to overturn altogether that historical hypothesis as to the time wherein he flourished, which has not only been favoured by the late romance writers, including Scott himself, but which we find adopted by Ritson in the biographical preface to his collection of the *Poems, Songs, and Ballads.*

"In the *Scotichronicon,* after relating the final defeat, in the latter part of Henry the Third's reign, of the great national party of England under Simon de Montfort, and the vast number of confiscations that ensued upon the triumph of the king and the foreign courtiers, Fordun adds a sentence which we cite literally at the foot of the page,* but which may be thus trans-

* Hoc in tempore de exheredatis et bannitis surrexit et caput erexit ille famosissimus sicarius *Robertus Hode* et *Littill Johanne,* cum eorum complicibus, de quibus stolidum vulgus hianter in comœdiis et tragœdiis prurienter festum faciunt et super ceteras romancias mimos et bardanos cantitare delectantur. (Forduni Scotichronicon Genuinum, ed. Hearne; Oxon. 1722, 8vo. p. 774. Joannis Forduni Scotichronicon, &c., ed. Goodall; Edinb. 1759, folio, vol. ii. p. 104.)

lated :—'Then, from among the dispossessed and the banished, arose that most famous cut-throat Robert Hood, and Little John, with their accomplices; whom the foolish multitude are so extravagantly fond of celebrating in tragedy and comedy; and the ballads concerning whom, sung by the jesters and minstrels, delight them beyond all others.' But, after thus designating the outlaw as 'ille famosissimus *sicarius*,' he qualifies the stigma by adding—'Of whom, however, some praiseworthy facts are narrated;'* and, as an instance of these commendable traits, he proceeds to relate, as an historic anecdote, a remarkable example of Robert's religious faith and fervour, and a miraculous deliverance which, on that particular occasion, was vouchsafed to him as a special reward.

"Now Fordun, it is important to observe, was no idle and dreaming story-teller. He was not even a member of any monastic order. He discharged, indeed, the functions of a secular priest, at Aberdeen, with the highest credit; and, although he had not graduated in the schools, was well entitled, by his learning and the purity of his life, to have aspired to high ecclesiastical honours. But to such a career he preferred the enjoyment of literary leisure, and above all, the indulgence of his taste for historical research. His performances in the latter department prove it to have been his genuine and special vocation. Not only was his knowledge of lettered antiquity, for the age in which he lived, of the very first order, and his style often superior to the standard of elegance in his time; but he possessed an active and sagacious industry of personal investigation, which in that day was an endowment yet more rarely to be met with in a chronicler. He travelled much in England for the express purpose of collecting historical materials; not only examining with care and diligence the manuscripts in its libraries, its ancient coins and inscriptions, its architectural antiquities, and sepulchral monuments; but giving, as we see, more

* De quo etiam quædam commendabilia recitantur, sicut patuit in hoc, &c. (Scotichronicon, ed. Hearne, p. 774;—ed. Goodall, ii. 104.

attention to the current popular traditions than was bestowed upon them by the English chroniclers of the same period.*

" The testimony of this most competent witness as to the time in which Robin Hood really lived, and the political circumstances out of which his outlaw character arose, is given, as we have shown, very particularly and emphatically, without the slightest doubt or qualification. Amongst all the authorities which have been cited for placing Robin's existence under Henry II, Richard I, and John, there is not one which, either in antiquity of date, or clearness and circumstantiality of testimony, can stand for a moment against the single passage above quoted. Neither is it conceivable that Fordun (who travelled and wrote in the latter half of the fourteenth century), or his English informants, should have made a mistake of almost a hundred years in a date (even on that supposition), barely two centuries old; should have transferred the existence of a man whose exploits in defiance of the public authorities had attracted the attention of the whole kingdom for so long a period, and formed in the chronicler's own lifetime, according to his own statement, the favourite subject of the people's festal plays and songs, both in England and Scotland, a whole century nearer to their own time.

" Nor is this all. Fordun's junior contemporary and personal pupil, Bower, abbot of St. Columb, who completed and continued his work, has a further notice of our hero's participation in that warfare against the court faction, which, in several quarters of the kingdom, continued for some time after the fall of the great patriotic leader. Under the year 1266, he tells us:—' In this year were obstinate hostilities carried on between the dispossessed barons of England and the royalists, amongst whom Roger Mortimer occupied the Marches of Wales, and John Daynil the Isle of Ely. Robert Hood now lived an outlaw among the woodland copses and thickets.†

* See the Preface to Fordun's Chronicle, by his judicious English editor Hearne, and especially its 20th section, beginning " Quamvis autem in scholis graduatus non esset Fordunus," &c.

† Isto etiam anno grassati sunt acriùs Angliæ barones exheredati

"Here, then, in order to understand at all distinctly the position of Robert and his associates, as among the men dispossessed and proscribed at the period in question, it becomes indispensable to examine, with some attention, the political and social elements which entered into the national struggle.

"The lapse of a hundred and thirty years was requisite, before the deep moral gulf which the Conquest had established between two races absolutely foreign to each other, forcibly brought into physical contact at every point of the English soil, could be so far filled up as to make it possible for them to be animated by one and the same predominant public spirit in pursuit of a common political object—before the descendants and successors of the military colonists, whom the first William had left *encamped* on the Anglo-Saxon territory, could begin to feel themselves *settled* there.

"But this once felt, a new series of internal movements, tending to place the regal office in harmony with the altered state of the national body, was absolutely inevitable. The Anglo-Norman king *could* not continue to retain the discretional powers of a commander-in-chief. The violent regime by which alone, in the first instance, the collective body of the conquerors could have retained their gripe of the lands, towns, and bodies of the Anglo-Saxons, *must* be restrained; and this could only be done by elaborating some sort of a *written* constitution. Hence the necessary birth of Magna Charta, which is nothing more than the verbal expression of the most urgent political wants of the age. After all the mystification about this matter, which has been put forth in later times, it cannot be too emphatically stated, that there is nothing in all history which more clearly resulted from the immediate exigency of political circumstances —there is no public transaction on record more strongly impressed with the character of an act of *self-preservation*, than

---

et regales: inter quos Rogerus de Mortuomari marchias Walliæ, Johannes Daynillis insulam de Heli occupabant. Robertus Hode nunc inter fruteta et dumeta silvestria exulabat. (Scotichronicon, ed. Goodall, vol. ii. p. 104.)

the digesting of this famous document by the temporal and spiritual baronage of that day."

The writer then devotes several pages of the Review to the well-known intermediate events which took place during the latter part of the reign of King John, of that of his helpless child Henry, under the regency of the sagacious Earl of Pembroke, and upon his decease under the tutelage of the minister and creature of King John, the great justiciary Hubert de Burgh; and through the subsequent vacillating measures of the reign of Henry himself; describing the charters he first confirmed and then abrogated; until he raised up, in the person of Simon de Montfort, first Earl of Leicester, and other barons of the realm, those assertors of the people's rights, which led to the decisive victory, and the celebrated treaty in their favour, consequent thereon, the Mise of Lewes; and afterwards to the no less decisive and fatal battle of Evesham, which ended in the overthrow and death of De Montfort by Prince Edward.

He then resumes his narrative as follows:—

"It is for want of rightly conceiving the true character of the Conquest itself, and the consequent fate of the town populations involved in it,—and then tracing the successive stages by which they raised themselves again, to municipal, and afterwards to political existence,—that our historians have spent so much vague and contradictory conjecture as to the *motives* that could actuate De Montfort in setting the example of calling together the town representatives as an estate of parliament.* In the

* History, however, has treated his memory with severity; and no writer has yet arisen to weigh with a careful and impartial hand the prominent part which he took in the constitutional wars of the

natural and necessary progress of the burgesses towards thorough political emancipation, this was the *next grand step*—the thing which, whether sooner or later, *must come next*. It was the question which, as regards their connection with the subject of general taxation, had been for half a century the leading one in the minds of the burgesses themselves.

"All things now tended to introduce this improvement. It had long been the engrossing object of the political aspirations of the burghers—an object for which they were probably more ardently zealous than they have been for any subsequent legislatorial amelioration—since the first step out of absolute slavery is ever more delightful than any amount of accession to liberty already possessed. There would have been more cause for surprise in De Montfort's neglecting than in his adopting this long-desired innovation, now that the arbitrary faction were prostrate at his feet. And if any further evidence were requisite to show that he was acting from no arbitrary or whimsical assumption of his own, we find it in the great fact, that in spite of all Edward's efforts to avoid resorting to what he desired to consider and represent as the momentary expedient of a rebellious adversary, yet, in the later part of his reign, he found himself under an absolute necessity of solemnly recognizing the parliamentary existence of the citizens and burgesses.*

---

time. Such a task is difficult; for all contemporary writers are either his zealous partizans or bitter adversaries. That Leicester, especially in the latter part of his career, was actuated partly by interest and ambition can scarcely be doubted; but the manner in which he commenced his agitations, and his abandonment of advantages to himself for the amelioration of the condition of the people, are sufficient to shew, to a certain extent, the purity of his motives, and to take away from him the ignoble title of traitor.—Introduction to Rishanger's "Chronicle," p. 26-7. Camden Soc. Publications.

* Montfort was the instrument of disclosing to the world that great institution of representation, which was to introduce into popular governments a regularity and order far more perfect than had heretofore been purchased by submission to absolute power, and to draw

"Yet it seems not unlikely, that this concession of Leicester's to the wants of the age and the demands of true policy, gave umbrage to some of his coadjutors. The barbarous contempt with which a military aristocracy, so recently sprung from a desolating and expropriating conquest, regarded the great agent of civilization, commerce, still subsisted in mighty force —though its harshness was abating, in proportion as the broad distinction between Norman and Saxon was disappearing in the gradual fusion of blood and language. Motives of this nature probably contributed materially to that defection of De Montfort's colleague, the young Earl of Gloucester, which, facilitating the escape of Prince Edward, enabled the latter to fall upon Leicester by surprise, with greatly superior numbers, and annihilate the high-raised hopes of the nation, by exterminating the *élite* of its defenders in the remorselessly sanguinary battle of Evesham, fought on Tuesday, the 6th of August, 1265.

"This fierce and murderous conflict was fatal to the patriotic cause. The loss of its magnanimous and sagacious leader, together with so many of his distinguished brethren in arms and in council, was irreparable. Henry used so decisive a victory, as he had been accustomed to use minor advantages. 'The king distinguished himself by nothing but the unmanly insolence of a feeble mind intoxicated by undeserved success.' He packed a parliament at his own discretion, whose acts profusely gratified the revenge and rapacity of himself and his minions. And he now finally and triumphantly trampled, with contumely unbounded, upon the charter to which he had so repeatedly, solemnly, and religiously sworn—the instrument which, for half a century, had been the sacred watchword of English liberty.*

forth liberty from confinement in single cities, to a fitness for being spread over territories, which experience does not forbid us to hope may be as vast as have ever been grasped by the iron gripe of a despotic conqueror."—Mackintosh's "History of England," vol. i. p. 238.

* There can be no apology necessary for the insertion here of the following long extract from the Introduction to Rishanger's "Chronicle," by Mr. J. O. Halliwell, p. xxxv. Camden Society's publications,

"'On the death of De Montfort, to borrow the eloquent language of M. Thierry, 'the old patriotic superstition of the

---

as it contains so many judicious remarks on Simon De Montfort's character.

"After the battle of Evesham,* the party of the barons made few efforts, and those unsuccessful against the rule of their conquerors. The parliament shortly afterwards assembled by Henry was the pliant instrument of his rapacity and revenge.† The followers of Leicester were proscribed, and the confiscation‡ of the lands of all the persons who had been, or were then, engaged in the rebellion, and the gift of them to the king, was one of the first measures on which the parliament determined. 'It was not to be supposed,' says Mr. Hunter,§ 'that a parliament thus assembled, before the excitement had time to subside, would proceed in the spirit of moderation in respect of the measures which the king might be advised to take; or that the king himself, who had just escaped from a restraint of fourteen months' duration, would be unwilling to avail himself of the advantageous position in which he was placed, to break for ever a power which he had found so dangerous.' True, but all Henry's dangerous enemies perished at Evesham; and, with Henry's known character before our view, we cannot attribute his motives thus, but rather, as Sir James Mackintosh expresses it, 'to the unmanly insolence of a feeble mind intoxicated by undeserved success.' Would any regard to his own power, for it could not have been a care for the safety of his

---

* According to the Red Book of the Exchequer, the time of war lasted from April 4th, 1264, to September 16th, 1265.

† Mackintosh's "History of England," vol. i. p. 244. Cf. Chron. Wykes. "Post hæc Eduardus de Londinensibus et pluribus aliis triumphans, nec fidem nec spem datam pluribus observavit; sed crudelitatibus inserviens, quosdam in prisione vitam finire fecit, et alios exhæredans, terras eorum suis fautoribus pro parte distribuit." —W. de Nangis, Spicil. Luc. Dacher. tom. iii. p. 41. "Rex ergo, mortuo domino Symone de Monteforti, ad suos et priorem statum suum reversus est."—MS. Cotton, Cleop. A. i. fol. 191. r°. *a*.

‡ Cf. MS. Harl. 6359; MS. Cart. Antiq. Cotton. xi. 18. Most of Leicester's own possessions were given to Henry's youngest son, Edmund: Sir Francis Palgrave's Antient Kalendars and Inventories of the Exchequer, vol. i. p. 68.

§ Rotuli Selecti, etc. præf. p. xxxi.

English was awakened in his favour. Being an enemy to the foreigners, and as a contemporary writer expresses it, a defender

---

people, have justified his treatment of his own sister, even though she were the wife of his unhappy adversary? For surely the banishment* from the country of so near a relation, who had herself been guiltless of any wrong towards him, was cruel and unnecessary. Yet this was the sovereign whose outward piety, and devotion to the interests of religion,† were so remarkable. The murder of Prince Henry may almost be considered a mark of retributive justice.‡

Nearly all our contemporary historians are partisans§ of the Earl of Leicester, and, when we consider that among them are numbered the *élite* of English literature at that period, this fact in his favour must not be passed over without notice. Another more remarkable circumstance is not so generally known, viz. that Montfort during a long period entertained a literary correspondence with Adam de Marisco, one of the most distinguished scholars of the time. The truth of this fact does not depend upon the statements of our chroniclers, or upon any individual allusions, but we actually possess a copy‖ of letters from Adam de Marisco addressed to Leicester,

---

* Cf. Chron. Petroburg. MS. Cotton. Claud. A. v. fol. 34, v°. a.

† "Hic fuit devotus Deo et ecclesiæ, et novum opus Westmonasterii inter alia sua facta laudabilia construxit." MS. Arundel. 310. fol. 218, v°. Cf. Heutzer's Travels, p. 255; MS. Cart. Antiq. xv. 7 memb. 7 fr.; MS. Harl. 3860, fol. 13, r°. β; MS. Cotton. Otho. D. VIII. fol. 214, v°. β.

‡ This prince was murdered in the church of St. Sylvester, at Viterbo, in 1271, by Guy and Simon, two sons of Simon de Montfort, in revenge for the indignant treatment of the body of their father. Gregory X issued bulls against the murderers on the application of Edward I. The original bull against Simon de Montfort is preserved in the archives of the cathedral of Orvieto. (Proceedings of the Royal Society of Literature, p. 17.) The original bull against Guy de Montfort is in the library of the Vatican, and is copied in the MS. Bibliotheca Vaticana in the State Paper Office; other copies are in MS. Lansd. 397, and MS. Lambeth, 499. See also Excerpta Historica, p. 267; Devon's Issues of the Exchequer, p. 83; Abbreviatio Placitorum, p. 264.

§ Rishanger is so in all his writings, and it is difficult to reconcile the knowledge of this fact with Bale's title of Historiographus Regius.

‖ MS. Cotton. Vitell. cviii. See the new Biographical Dictionary,

of the rights of lawful property, he was honoured with the same title as the popular gratitude had conferred upon those who, in

although we do not appear to have any of Montfort's answers in a continued series. The letters that remain to us, however, are replete with curious and valuable notices of the history of the period to which this chronicle relates; but I have purposely avoided any more distinct allusion to them, because they will ere long be printed entire. Rishanger, in his continuation of Matthew Paris, and in our chronicle, expressly bestows on Montfort the praise of literature, in a passage the truth of which has been doubted by one of our most eminent historians, and the above statement proves beyond a doubt that our historiographer has advanced nothing more than the truth.* To me this confirmation of Rishanger greatly increases the validity of his other remarkable relations, while every one must allow the probabilities are strengthened for allowing Leicester a more extensive foresight than has generally been ascribed to him in his agitations. If it were true that he paid court to the lower orders to gain allies against the nobility, as one ancient chronicler,† and several modern historians, have surmised, it would only more clearly prove that his ambition was guided by sagacity; that he saw the part of society which was growing in strength, and with which a provident government ought to seek an alliance; that, amidst the noise and confusion of popular complaint, he had learned the art of decyphering its often wayward language, and of discriminating the clamour of a moment from demands rooted in the nature and circumstances of society.‡ We might not perhaps be far wrong in ascribing his enlargement of the basis of our legislature to a similar origin, although those who were among the foremost to support the innovation when its fitness to the state of society became apparent, were not willing to attribute it to such a cause. His was not a contest for the equalization of property, made by one who had nothing to lose, in the hope of being bettered by a revolution; nor was it that senseless spirit of opposition

vol. i. p. 89. There are also some letters to Grosteste, the Queen, the Countess of Leicester, and others. Cf. MS. Digb. 103. MS. Collect. James, iv. p. 65; Lelandi Collectanea.

* See p. 6 of Rishanger's Chronicle, and notes.

† Thomas Wykes, p. 66.

‡ Mackintosh's History of England, vol. i. p. 246.

the time of the Norman invasion, had devoted themselves in defence of the country. Simon, like them, received the appellation of defender of the natives. To call him traitor and rebel was declared to be a falsehood; and he was proclaimed a saint and martyr as much as Thomas Becket himself.'

"The contemporary ballad on the fall of De Montfort is one of those effusions which convey the peculiar tone of a nation's feelings under powerful excitement, with a depth and truth which no powers of dissertation, or even of narration, can adequately render. The original piece is in the Anglo-Norman French of the day, and was first printed by Mr. Ritson, in his collection of *Ancient Songs and Ballads*, from a manuscript of Edward the Second's time, in the Bodleian Library. The following translation of it was made, at Mr. Ritson's request, by Mr. George Ellis, the able editor of *Specimens of the Early English Poets.*

In song my grief shall find relief,
Sad is my verse and rude;
I sing in tears our gentle peers
Who fell for England's good.
Our peace they sought, for us they fought,
For us they dared to die;
And where they sleep, a mangled heap,
Their wounds for vengeance cry.
On Evesham's plain is Montfort slain,
Well skill'd the war to guide;
Where streams his gore shall all deplore
Fair England's flower and pride.

---

to authority, merely because it is authority, which sometimes arises after a long continued peace;* but it was a contest for freedom, for justice, and for natural and reasonable rights.

* "From hence the commons, to whom days present seem ever worst, commend the foregone ages they never remembered, and condemn the present, though they knew neither the disease thereof, nor the remedie." (Cotton's View of the Life and Reign of Henry the Third, p. 3.)

Ere Tuesday's sun its course had run,
Our noblest chiefs had bled:
While rush'd to fight each gallant knight,
Their dastard vassals fled:
Still undismay'd, with trenchant blade
They hew'd their desperate way:
Not strength or skill to Edward's will,
But numbers gave the day.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

Yet, by the blow that laid thee low,
Brave earl, one palm was given;
Nor less at thine than Becket's shrine
Shall rise our vows to heaven!
Our church and laws, your common cause;
'Twas his the church to save;
Our rights restor'd, thou, generous lord,
Shalt triumph in thy grave.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

Despenser true, the good Sir Hugh,*
Our justice and our friend,
Borne down with wrong, amidst the throng,
Has met his wretched end.
Sir Henry's fate need I relate,
Our Leicester's gallant son,
Or many a score of barons more,
By Gloucester's hate undone.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

Each righteous lord who brav'd the sword,
And for our safety died,
With conscience pure shall aye endure
Our martyr'd saint beside.
That martyr'd saint was never faint
To ease the poor man's care;
With gracious will he shall fulfil
Our just and earnest prayer.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

* Sir Hugh Le Despenser, made grand-justiciary at the time of enacting the Provisions of Oxford.

On Montfort's breast a hair-cloth vest
His pious soul proclaim'd;
With ruffian hand the ruthless band
That sacred emblem stain'd:
And, to assuage their impious rage,
His lifeless corpse defaced,
Whose powerful arm long saved from harm
The realm his virtues graced.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

Now all draw near, companions dear,
To Jesus let us pray,
That Montfort's heir his grace may share,
And learn to heaven the way.
No priest I name; none, none I blame,
Nor aught of ill surmise:
Yet, for the love of Christ above,
I pray, be churchmen wise.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

No good, I ween, of late is seen,
By earl or baron done;
Nor knight or squire to fame aspire,
Or dare disgrace to shun.
Faith, truth, are fled, and, in their stead,
Do vice and meanness rule;
E'en on the throne may soon be shown
A flatterer or a fool.
On Evesham's plain, &c.

Brave martyr'd chief! no more our grief
For thee or thine shall flow;
Among the blest, in heaven ye rest
From all your toils below.
But, for the few, the gallant crew,
Who here in bonds remain,*

* *En prisone dure*, says the ballad, alluding to the fate of the very few made prisoners at Evesham, in consequence of their having been found breathing among the slain after the general carnage.

Christ condescend their woes to end,
And break the tyrant's chain!
On Evesham's plain, &c.*

"So much for the sad and plaintive side of the national sentiment—the side of dim hope and melancholy resignation. Now turn we to other and more cheerful notes. If, since the fatal field of Hastings, no day had ever been so disastrous to English freedom as that of Evesham,—if the great cause of constitutional establishment had its Harold in De Montfort,—it had also its Hereward—yet more persevering and invincible than

* Another translation of this tragic ballad, so well known as the "Lament" of Simon de Montfort, was made also, at Mr. Ritson's request, by Sir Walter Scott, and is inserted at the end of the third volume of Ritson's "English Songs," Park's edition, 1813. This translation is certainly inferior to Mr. Ellis's both in its feeling and accuracy. Another poem which was equally popular exists.

"In the latter end of the reign of Henry the Third," says Mr. Warton, in his "History of English Poetry," "a poem occurs, the date of which may be determined with some degree of certainty. It is a satirical song or ballad, written by one of the adherents of Simon de Montfort Earl of Leicester, soon after the battle of Lewes, which was fought in the year 1264, (previous to the battle of Evesham), and which proved very fatal to the interests of the king. In this decisive action, Richard, King of the Romans, his brother, Henry the Third, and Prince Edward, with many others of the royal party, were taken prisoners.

"These popular rhymes," continues Warton, "had probably no small influence in encouraging Leicester's partisans, and diffusing his faction. There is some humour in imagining that Richard supposed the windmill to which he retreated, to be a fortification, and that he believed the sails of it to be military engines. In the manuscript from which this specimen is transcribed, immediately follows a song in French, seemingly written by the same poet, on the battle of Evesham, fought the following year, in which Leicester was killed, and his rebellious barons defeated."—Warton's "History of English Poetry," 8vo. edition, by Price, 1824, p. 47.

Copies of the original of both these poems, and Sir Walter Scott's translation of the "Lament," will be inserted in the Appendix.—Editor.

him of old—in Robert Hood, the 'famosissimus sicarius,' whom our worthy Scottish friend Fordun numbers among the *exheredati et banniti* of this melancholy period. We have already quoted the passage from his continuator, the abbot Bower, wherein he tells us that, in the year after that in which the battle of Evesham was fought, 'Robertus Hode nunc inter fruteta et dumeta silvestria exulabat.'

"If the very form of our hero's name, so authentically recorded, as well as the nature of his habitual weapons, were not in themselves quite enough to indicate the class of English freemen to which he originally belonged, the whole tenor of the oldest of the metrical narratives respecting him, coinciding entirely with what the facts just adverted to suggest, might be held to be decisive. The very first stanza of the last-mentioned composition, which we shall show to be cotemporary with the Scottish chroniclers, has these lines,—

I shall you tell of a good yemán,*
His name was Robyn Hode.

And throughout the piece, which is of great length, he preserves with rigorous consistency the yeoman's character. To this description of him all the older class of ballads adhere without exception: it is only some of the later song and playmongers that have been pleased to dignify him, as they thought, by turning him into a disinherited Earl of Huntingdon.

"To Chaucer's graphic and all-comprehensive pencil we are indebted, in that glorious gallery of national and professional character which precedes his *Canterbury Tales*, for a fine, exact, and lusty sketch of the *yeoman* of the day—such as might have suited the outward man, at least, of the great north-country archer himself:—

And he was cladde in cote and hode of grene.
A shefe of peacock arwes bright and kene
Under his belt he bare ful thriftily.
Wel coude he dresse his takel yemanly;

* See also "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" in Percy's Reliques, vol. i. p. 90, 91.—Editor.

His arwes drouped not with fetheres lowe,
And in his hond he bare a mighty bowe.
A not-hed hadde he, with a broune visage.
Of wood-craft coude he wel alle the usage.
Upon his arme he bare a gaie bracer,
And by his side a sword and a bokeler,
And on that other side a gaie daggere,
Harneised wel, and sharpe as point of spere:
A Cristofre on his brest of silver shene.
An horne he bare, the baudrik was of grene.
A forster was he sothely as I gesse.

"The yeoman and the bow, in short, were inseparable; and, in any military force of that day, formed the main strength of the combatants on foot, as the knights and esquires, with their lances, composed that of the horsemen. Now, the *chivalry* and the *yeomanry* had most cordially combined against the tyrannical and treacherous King Henry; and Robert Hood, no doubt, had drawn his formidable weapon with good effect at Lewes or at Evesham. He had drawn too strong a bow, in too good and old a cause, to be one of the first to lay it down, and submit himself to the tender mercies of Henry and his creatures. Let it not be thought that a man of his station was beneath the royal vengeance—baron, knight, squire, yeoman, burgess—Henry's 'great revenge had stomach for them all.' In his parliament of Winchester, which he assembled with all speed for the express purpose of glutting that 'stomach,' it was enacted, amongst other things, that the citizens of London, *for their obstinacy and excesses, should forfeit their charter;* and that the estates of *all* who had adhered to the late Earl of Leicester should be confiscated; although, as a special grace and favour, this last article was afterwards qualified by a declaration, wherein the king granted pardon to such as *could show*, that they had acted by compulsion.

"'These measures, however,' Dr. Lingard admits (though otherwise a most unblushing apologist of Henry and his court), 'were not calculated to restore the public tranquillity. The sufferers, prompted by revenge, or compelled by want, had again

recourse to the sword: the mountains, forests, and morasses, furnished them with places of retreat; and the flames of predatory warfare were kindled in most parts of the kingdom. To reduce these partial, but successive insurrections, occupied Prince Edward the better part of two years. He first compelled Simon de Montfort* and his associates, who had sought an asylum in the Isle of Axholm, to submit to the award which should be given by himself and the King of the Romans.† He next led his forces against the men of the Cinque Ports, who had long been distinguished by their attachment to Leicester, and who, since his fall, had by their *piracies* interrupted the commerce of the narrow seas, and made prizes of *all* ships belonging to the king's subjects. The capture of Winchelsea, which was carried by storm, *taught them to respect the authority of the sovereign:* and their power by sea made the prince desirous to recall them to their duty and attach them to the crown. They swore fealty to Henry; and in return, obtained a full pardon and the confirmation of their privileges. From the Cinque Ports Edward proceeded to Hampshire, which, with Berkshire and Surrey, was ravaged by numerous banditti, under the command of Adam Gordon, the most athletic man of the age. They were surprised in a wood near Alton. The prince engaged in single combat with their leader, wounded and unhorsed him; and then, in reward of his valour, granted him his pardon. Still the garrison of Kenilworth‡ continued to brave the royal power, and even added contumely to their disobedience. To subdue these obstinate rebels it was necessary to summon the chivalry of the kingdom: but the strength of the place defied all the efforts of the assailants; and the obstinacy of Hastings,

---

* Son and heir of the late Earl of Leicester.

† King Henry's brother, entitled King of the Romans, on account of his pretensions as Emperor elect of Germany.

‡ This place was the principal residence of the Montfort family, and was therefore that in which it was the point of honour with the earl's surviving friends to hold out to the utmost extremity.

the governor, refused for six months every offer which was made to him in the name of his sovereign.

" 'There were many, even among the royalists, who disapproved of the indiscriminate severity exercised by the parliament at Winchester; and a possibility was suggested of granting indulgence to the sufferers, and at the same time *satisfying those who had profited by their forfeitures.* With this view a committee was appointed of twelve prelates and barons, whose award was confirmed by the king in parliament, and called the *dictum de Kenilworth.* They divided the delinquents into three classes.' In the first class were the defenders of Kenilworth; 'the second comprised *all* who, on different occasions, had drawn the sword against their sovereign: in the third were numbered those who, though they *had not fought* under the banner, *had accepted offices* under the *authority*, of Leicester. To all was given the option of redeeming their estates by the payment to the actual possessors of certain sums of money, to the amount of seven years' value by delinquents of the first class, of five by those of the second, and of two years or one year by those of the third. Provisions were made for the sale of parts of the estates in order to raise the money. Men who had no estates *were to pay one half of their goods and chattels, and find security for their future behaviour.* Those who had neither lands nor goods, were to swear that they would preserve the peace, *find sureties, and stand to the judgment of the church.*

" 'By many the *boon* was accepted with *gratitude;* it was scornfully refused by the garrison of the Castle of Kenilworth, and by the outlaws who had fled to the Isle of Ely. The obstinacy of the former was subdued by famine; and they obtained from the *clemency* of the king the grant of their *lives, limbs, and apparel.* The latter, relying on the strength of their asylum, gloried in their rebellion, and occasionally ravaged the neighbouring country. Their impunity was, however, owing to the perfidy* of the Earl of Gloucester, who, without the talents,

* It seems not once to have occurred to Dr. Lingard that this earl had been guilty of any *perfidy* towards his late illustrious colleague.

aspired to the fame and pre-eminence of his deceased rival. He expressed his disapprobation of the award: the factious* inhabitants of London chose him for their leader; and his presumption was nourished by the daily accession of outlaws from different parts of the country. Henry summoned his friends to the siege of the capital; and the earl, when he beheld from the walls the royal army, and reflected on the consequences of a defeat, condemned his own temerity, accepted the mediation of the king of the Romans, and, on the condition of receiving a full pardon, *gladly returned to his duty.* His submission drew after it the submission of the other insurgents. . . . The outlaws in the Isle of Ely were also reduced. The king's poverty had disabled him from undertaking offensive measures against them; but a grant of the tenth part of the Church revenues for three years, which he had obtained from the pope,† infused new vigour into his councils: bridges were thrown over the rivers; roads were constructed across the marshes; and the rebels returned to their obedience on condition that they should enjoy the benefit of the Dictum of Kenilworth, which they had so contemptuously and obstinately refused.'‡ (*So far Dr. Lingard.*)

"Although the reverend historian labours so hard to impress us with the obstinacy and perversity of those who continued in resistance to so just and clement a monarch,—we hope there are few who will not sympathize with the little band who, making the 'shadowy desert' their dwelling-place, preferred the unconquered outlaw's life, beset with perils and hardships, and bereft of domestic endearments as it was, to the acceptance of

---

* Dr. Lingard should not have been surprised that the Londoners, after the Winchester parliament had seized their charter, were not in the best humour. After entering a few months before into the enjoyment of parliamentary privileges in addition to their municipal ones, to be now deprived even of the latter, was not exactly the right order of institutional progression.

† His Holiness had actually *forbidden* the payment of a tenth, which the clergy had granted to *Leicester's* administration.

‡ Hist. Eng. iii. 202-7.

the paltry dole of mercy held out to them by the mean and faithless tyrant, in an instrument, the very name of which seemed to mock their vanished hopes, by reminding them of the violated home of their venerated leader.

"To such a band the northern mountains and forests, especially the latter, afforded the most eligible retreat. The 'north country,' that is, the country north of Trent, was emphatically the outlaw's country: and never since the day when the Conqueror had quenched the stubborn, still-resisting, oft-rebelling spirit of Northumbria in blood and flame, had that region been wholly without its outlaw population;—so that our lord the king's northern outlaws were as constantly familiar to men's ears and imaginations as his 'Irish enemies' had been since Henry the Second's time. But these were commonly few and thinly scattered, consisting chiefly of men like Adam Bell, Clym of the Clough, and William of Cloudesly, 'outlawed for venyson,' that is, for infraction of the barbarous forest laws of the Norman régime. It required a great political crisis, like the one we are considering, and in which the friends of liberty should be decisively worsted, to bring to the outlaw forces numbers, organization, and a leader capable of establishing a regular guerilla warfare. Now, until the fall of De Montfort, no defeat so truly national had occurred since the fight of Hastings itself, and the territorial conquest which followed it.

"In that first great national struggle the Isle of Ely had been the last great refuge and strong-hold of Anglo-Saxon independence. The commander in that Saxon camp of refuge, was a man of astonishing prowess, activity, and dexterity, named Hereward, who, after having been long settled in Flanders, had come over to England, to revenge upon the usurpers of his paternal inheritance at Bourne, in Lincolnshire, the death of his father and the wrongs of his mother. His monastic contemporary, Ingulphus of Croyland, whose historical spirit and character bear a striking resemblance to those of Fordun, has left us some expressive traits of the vigorous career of this patriot hero."

The following account of Hereward is extracted from M. Thierry's History, by the present editor.

"At that time (A. D. 1072) there was in Flanders a Saxon named Hereward, who had long been settled there, and to whom some English emigrants, flying from their country after losing everything in it, announced that his father was dead, that his paternal inheritance had become the property of a Norman, and that his aged mother had suffered, and was still suffering, every kind of affliction and insult.* At this news Hereward set out for England, and arrived unsuspected at the place where his family had formerly dwelt. He made himself known to such of his relations and friends as had survived the invasion; he prevailed on them to form an armed band, and, at the head of them attacked the Norman who had insulted his mother and usurped his inheritance.† Hereward drove him away, and took his place; but being compelled for his own safety not to confine himself to this single exploit, he continued a partisan warfare in the vicinity of his residence, and sustained against the governors of the neighbouring towns and fortresses numerous conflicts, in which he made himself famous for his valour, skill, and for extraordinary personal strength.‡ The rumour of his brilliant achievements was spread throughout England; the eyes of the conquered people were turned towards this man with a feeling of hope; his adventures and his praises were made the theme of certain highly popular songs, which are no longer extant, but were long sung in the streets in the very ears of the

* Paternam hæreditatem, munere regio cuidam Normanno donati, matremque viduam multis injuriis et maximis molestiis affegi. (Ingulf. Croyland, à Gale, p. 70.)

† Collectâque cognatorum non contemnendâ manu.... de suâ hæreditate procul fugat et eliminat. (Ibid.)

‡ Ingentia prælio et mille pericula tam contra regem Angliæ quàm comites et barones, et contra præfectos et præsides. (Ingulf. Croyland. Ibid. p. 68.)

conquerors, under favour of their long-continued ignorance of the idiom of the subjugated people."*

The writer in the Review thus continues:—

"Whether Robert Hood shared in the protracted defence of the same Isle of Ely against Henry the Third, we know not; though such a combatant would probably be wherever the most strenuous and persevering resistance was to be made. But the English yeoman closely resembles the Anglo-Saxon thane in the manner in which he contrived to continue a war of detail against the victorious power, long after the general defeat of the national cause, stimulated and encouraged, perhaps, by traditions yet current respecting the achievements of his predecessor.

"The next historical glimpse of him is given us in the anecdote related by Fordun, to which we have already alluded, and which we must now lay before the reader. This exhibits him fairly installed in that sylvan abode in the West Riding of Yorkshire, which all the older traditions concur in representing as having been to the last his favourite retreat, and the principal centre of his devious and complicated movements. We cite the original passage at the foot of the page,† and here translate it as exactly as we are able:—

---

* Prout adhuc in triviis canuntur. (Ingulf. Croyland, à Gale, p. 68.)

† Cum ipse quondam in Barnisdale, iram regis et fremitum principis declinans, missam, ut solitus erat, devotissimè audiret, nec aliqua necessitate volebat interrumpere officium; quadam die cum audiret missam, à quodam vicecomite et ministris regis, cum sæpius per prius ipsum infestantibus, in illo secretissimo loco nemorali, ubi missæ interfuit, exploratus, venientes ad eum qui hoc de suis perceperunt, ut omni annisu fugeret suggesserunt. Quod, ob reverentiam sacramenti quod tunc devotissime venerabatur, omnino facere recusavit. Sed, cæteris suis ob metum mortis trepidantibus, Robertus in tantum confisus in eum quem coluit, inveritus, cum paucissimis qui tunc fortè ei affuerunt, inimicos congressus, eos de facili devicit, et de eorum

"'Once upon a time, in Barnsdale, where he was avoiding the wrath of the king and the rage of the prince, while engaged in very devoutly hearing mass, as he was wont to do, nor would he interrupt the service for any occasion,—one day, I say, while so at mass, it happened that a certain viscount and other officers of the king, who had often before molested him, were seeking after him in that most retired woodland spot wherein he was thus occupied. Those of his men who first discovered this pursuit, came and entreated him to fly with all speed; but this, from reverence for the consecrated host, which he was then most devoutly adoring, he absolutely refused to do. While the rest of his people were trembling for fear of death, Robert alone, confiding in Him whom he fearlessly worshipped, with the very few whom he then had beside him, encountered his enemies, overcame them with ease, was enriched by their spoils and ransom, and was thus induced to hold ministers of the church and masses in greater veneration than ever, as mindful of the common saying—

God hears the man that often hears the mass.'

"This mention of 'the king' and 'the prince,' from whose vindictive pursuit the yeoman was concealing himself in the woodlands between Doncaster and Pontefract, clearly assigns this achievement to the latter part of the period of two years following the battle of Evesham, during which Prince Edward was engaged in subduing the various bands who remained in arms in different quarters. The very *ire* and *rage* here spoken of, seem to have been so violent as could only be excited in the royal and the princely breast by being foiled in their efforts against the last and most obstinate of the insurgent bands. That one or more priests remained with this little fragment

---

spoliis ac redemptione ditatus, ministros ecclesiæ et missas in majore veneratione semper et de post habere præelegit, attendens quod vulgariter dictum est:

Hunc Deus exaudit, qui missam sæpius audit.

(Scotichronicon, ed. Hearne, p. 774; ed. Goodall, tom. ii. p. 104.)

from the great wreck of the national cause, appears from the emphatic particularity with which the celebration of mass at the outlaw's quarters is recorded. That the 'certain viscount,' who so constantly molested him, and whose capture and ransom are thus related, was the same who figures so prominently in the ballads as 'The Sheryf of Notyngham,' and what manner of personage this 'Sheryf' really was, will shortly appear from other sources. An outlawed follower of De Montfort, of the yeoman class, who could perform such feats as the one here related by the Scottish chronicler—who could thus continue, long after even the valiant outlaws in other quarters had made their submission, to set the king's authority, and what was much more, the skilful prowess of Prince Edward, and all the force and dexterity of the royal officers, at defiance—might well be the hero and the idol of the industrious classes of his time, especially of the agricultural. The same spirit which beheld a genuine martyr in 'Sir Simon,' saw in the marvellous achievements and escapes of the religious and patriotic yeoman outlaw the special protection of heaven. Well might he become the favourite subject of their holiday plays and songs; well might the ballads concerning him, as Fordun relates, 'delight them beyond all others.'

"The one among these metrical compositions which, of all the literary sources of information respecting our hero, possesses, after the valuable passage in Fordun, most of the character of an authentic historical document, is a long metrical narrative, in the oldest and most ordinary ballad stanza, entitled, *A Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode*, divided into eight 'fyttes' or cantos, and amounting in the whole to full four hundred and fifty stanzas. In considering this production, the language of which denotes it to be, in its present shape, at least as old as Chaucer's time, and therefore of a date approaching as closely to the actual existence of the outlaws as that in which Fordun wrote, we must endeavour to divest our minds of the modern association which links the idea of intentional and studied fiction with that of metrical narration. The ballad form was the only conveniently practicable one in which popular history

could then be produced, and was therefore its strictly legitimate shape. The writing and reading which (in the absence of printing) the ecclesiastics and richer laymen used and enjoyed, existed little for the great bulk of the people, not at all for those poorer and more oppressed classes who most fondly adopted the great freebooter as their hero. History

> 'to their eyes her ample page,
> Rich with the spoils of Time, did ne'er unroll.'

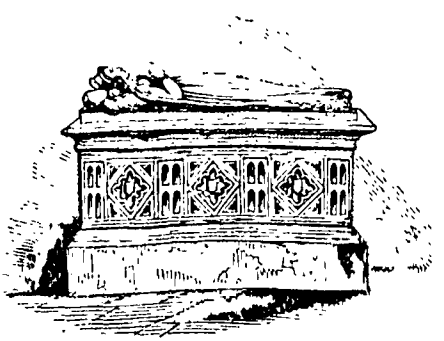
Monks, indeed, compiled chronicles, but not for them. Their only volume was the memory of the strolling minstrel,—and the necessity of aiding that memory by rhyme and measure, was a consideration quite as urgent as that of the eternal passion of unlettered man for song, however rude.

After this able vindication of the character of Robin Hood by the writer in the *London and Westminster Review*, and the attempt of the present editor to affix a more recent date than has been usually assigned to the age of Robin Hood's exploits;—the traditionary means through which his adventures have been handed down to us, by legendary writings, and the confirmatory testimony of the historians, Fordun and others, whose works approached so near to the era of his life, that they ought to obtain for them that credibility which attaches to many more important events;—enough may appear to have been said by way of introduction, and in justification of this new edition of the *Lytell Geste of Robin Hood*, and of the other ballads relating to this popular character. But it is to the contents of the *Legend of the Lytell Geste* that the editor would especially direct attention for "ampler narrative and more particular delineation of the YEOMAN'S life, character and adventures." The main body of this poem, to repeat

the words of the writer in the Review, "forming a truly heroic narrative, exhibiting the chieftain in the highest character assigned to him by tradition, that of a redresser of injuries and succourer of the oppressed."

The wood engraving at the head of this dissertation on Robin Hood's station and character in history, is a representation of what is usually called "the Major Oak," as it existed a short time since in Sherwood Forest.

The subjoined tail-piece is copied from Mr. Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments*, and represents the tomb of the fair Matilda, daughter of Lord Fitzwalter, the supposed Maid Marian of Robin Hood. It stands in the priory church of Little Dunmow in Essex, with another of the Fitzwalter family (vide pp. 40, 41, Life of Robin Hood, *ante*).



A LYTELL GESTE OF ROBIN HODE.

ACCOUNT OF THE VARIOUS EDITIONS OF THE LYTELL GESTE.

THIS ancient legend is printed from the copy of an edition, in 4to. and black letter, by Wynken de Worde, preserved in the public library at Cambridge; compared with, and, in some places, corrected by, another impression (apparently from the former), likewise in 4to. and black letter, by William Copland; a copy of which is among the late Mr. Garrick's old plays, now in the British Museum. The full title of the first edition is as follows: 'Here beginneth a mery geste of Robyn Hode and his meyne, and of the proude sheryfe of Notyngham;' and the printer's colophon runs thus: 'Explycit. Kynge Edwarde and Robyn hode & Lytell Johan. Emprented at London in Flete strete at the sygne of the sone. By Wynken de Worde.' To Copland's edition is added 'a newe playe for to be played in Maye games very pleasaunte and full of pastyme;' which will be found at large in another place. No other copy of either edition is known to be extant; but, by the favour of the Rev. Dr. Farmer, the editor hath in his hands a few leaves of an old 4to. black letter impression, judged by its late worthy possessor, than whom no one can decide in these matters with more certainty, to be of Rastall's printing, and older, by some years, than the above edition of Wynken de Worde, which yet, though without date, we may safely place as high as the year 1520. Among the same gentleman's numerous literary curiosities is likewise another edition, 'printed,' after Copland's, 'for Edward White,' (4to. black letter, no date, but entered in the Stationers' books 13 May, 1594) which, as well as the above fragment, hath been collated, and every variation worthy of notice either adopted or remarked in the margin. The only desertion from all the copies (except in necessary corrections) is the division of stanzas, the indenting of the lines, the addition of points, the

disuse of abbreviations, and the occasional introduction or rejection of a capital letter; liberties, if they may be so called, which have been taken with most of the other poems in this collection.

The above account of the various editions of the *Lytell Geste* is extracted verbatim from Mr. Ritson's edition of Robin Hood. As an edition, however, printed at Edinburgh by Walter Chepman and Andrew Myllar in 1508, has been alluded to in pages 80-81 of the foregoing dissertation, we also subjoin the following more minute history of it, which appears in the reprint published by Messrs. Laing at Edinburgh in 1827.

After reciting who these early printers Chepman and Myllar were, (not Ch*a*pman as in page 80, but Chepman) and what works they printed at Edinburgh under an exclusive privilege granted to them by King James IV, for establishing a printing-press in Scotland, 15th September, 1507, for imprinting within the realm of the books of the laws, acts of parliament, chronicles, mass books, manuals, matin books, and postures, with additions and legends of Scottish saints, &c. &c., the history of these printers and of the romances afterwards printed by them is thus related.

"Under the protection of their exclusive privilege (the only direct and public encouragement they are known to have received) Walter Chepman and his partner appear to have thought it prudent to make their first feeble essays in typography on some of the lighter and more popular sorts of national literature; and in the course of the year 1508, there issued from their press, in the South gate of Edinburgh, a considerable number of separate tracts, consisting chiefly of metrical romances, ballads, and other poems, mostly of Scottish composition. . . . . And with this collection of metrical tracts that issued from their press within a few months after its first establishment, the typographical labours of Chepman and Myllar would probably have

terminated, but for the excellent Bishop Elphinstone; under whose immediate direction, in the years 1509 and 1510, they printed the Scottish Service Book, to which the title of the Breviary of Aberdeen has been attached.

"The Breviary, although now a work of extreme rarity, has never been entirely lost sight of by the curious in early Scottish typography; but of the other productions of the press of Chepman and Myllar, not a trace was known to exist till the year 1788, when a medical gentleman of Edinburgh presented to the library of the Faculty of Advocates a small decayed and mutilated volume, which was said to have been picked up somewhere in Ayrshire, but of the history or value of which he was equally uninformed. This neglected and long-forgotten volume proved to be a collection of those tracts which had been published in or about the year 1508; and which, mutilated and defective as it was, possessed an almost inestimable value, as containing various compositions nowhere else preserved—as being a book completely unique—and as exhibiting unquestionably the earliest productions of the Scottish press.

"The importance so naturally attached to these precious and interesting relics of the early literature and typography of Scotland, suggested the idea of a *fac-simile* reprint."

This was long retarded, it seems, from the mutilated state of the original, the inaccuracy of the printing, and the obscure nature of the compositions themselves.

"After these difficulties had been well overcome, and the volume completed, with the exception of the preliminary notices intended to be prefixed to it, a disastrous fire consumed the premises where the printed sheets were deposited, and thus the greater portion of the volume was either entirely destroyed, or left in a state altogether useless. By reprinting several of the sheets, however, the publishers succeeded in completing seventy-six copies, four of which are upon vellum. The leaves of all copies therefore bear more or less the appearance of having been burnt."

The titles of the romances and poems contained in the volume are as follows.

i. The Knightly Tale of Golargus and Gawane.
ii. The Goldyn Targe, by Dunbar.
iii. The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedy.
iv. The Tretis of the two mareit wemen, and the wedow, by Dunbar.
v. Ballad of Lord Barnard Stewart, Lord of Aubigny, &c. by Dunbar.
vi. The Tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, by Henryson.
vii. Ane Buke of Gud Counsale to the King.
viii. The Maying of Desport of Chaucer.
ix. Sir Eglamour of Artoys.
x. A Gest of Robyn Hude.
xi. The Porteus of Nobleness.

The Geste of Robyn Hude is thus described.

"This fragment has apparently good claims to be esteemed the earliest printed work that is known respecting the exploits of this famous and noble-minded outlaw. Ritson, when employed in publishing his very curious and interesting collection, entitled Robin Hood, was unable, he tells us, to obtain any particular information with regard to the present *Gest;* but it is the same with the first piece in his volumes, taken from a copy printed by Wynken de Worde, which is divided into eight *fytts* or cantos. The present copy being a mere fragment, it was not thought necessary to swell out the volume by completing it from a work which is so deservedly well known and appreciated; although the deficiencies in the first three fytts have been thus supplied, and are distinguished by being enclosed within brackets."

This account of the various editions of the Lytell Geste, in addition to what has before been said of some pages of it in Mr. Douce's bequest of his books, &c., to the Bodleian library, contains every thing which the editor has been able to collect relating thereto.

Robyn stood in Bernysdale,
And lened hym to a tree,
And by hym stode Lytell Johan,
A good yeman was he.

a

Lytell Geste of Robyn Hode.

Fytte I.

Lithe and lysten, gentylmen,
That be of frebore blode;
I shall you tell of a good yeman,
His name was Robyn Hode.

Robyn was a proude outlawe,
Whyles he walked on grounde,
So curteyse an outlawe as he was one
Was never none yfounde.

Robyn stode in Bernysdale,
And lened hym to a tree,
And by hym stode Lytle Johan,
A good yeman was he;

And also dyde good Scathelock,
And Much the millers sone;
There was no ynche of his body,
But it was worthe a grome.

Than he spake hym Lytell Johan
All unto Robyn Hode,
Mayster, yf ye wolde dyne betyme,
It wolde do you moch good.

Then bespake good Robyn,
To dyne I have no lust,
Tyll I have some bolde baron,
Or some unketh gest,
That may paye for the best;
Or some knyght or some squyere
That dwelleth here by west.

A good maner than had Robyn,
In londe where that he were,
Every daye or he wolde dyne
Thre messes wolde he here:

The one in the worshyp of the fader,
The other of the holy goost,
The thyrde was of our dere lady,
That he loved of all other moste.

Robyn loved our dere lady,
For doute of dedely synne;
Wolde he never do company harme
That ony woman was ynne.

Mayster, then sayd Lytell Johan,
And we our borde shall sprede,
Tell us whether we shall gone,
And what lyfe we shall lede;

Where we shall take, where we shall leve,
Where we shall abide behynde,
Where we shall robbe, where we shall reve,
Where we shall bete and bynde.

Ther of no fors, than sayd Robyn,
We shall do well I nowe;
But loke ye do no housbonde harme
That tylleth with his ploughe;

No more ye shall no good yeman,
That walketh by grene wode shawe,
Ne no knyght ne no squyer,
That wolde be a good felawe.

These bysshoppes, and these archebysshoppes,
Ye shall them bete and bynde;
The hye sheryfe of Notynghame,
Hym holde in your mynde.

This worde shall be holde, sayd Lytyll Johan,
And this lesson shall we lere;
It is ferre dayes, god sende us a gest,
That we were at our dynere.

Take thy good bowe in thy hande, said Robyn,
Let Moche wende with the,
And so shall Wyllyam Scathelocke,
And no man abyde with me.

And walke up to the Sayles,
And so to Watlynge strete,
And wayte after some unketh gest,
Up chaunce ye mowe them mete.

Be he erle or ony baron,
Abbot or ony knyght,
Brynge hym to lodge to me,
Hys dyner shall be dyght.

They wente unto the Sayles,
These yemen all thre,
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man see.

But as they loked in Barnysdale,
By a derne strete,
Then came there a knyght rydynge,
Full sone they gan hym mete.

All dreri was his semblaunce,
And lytell was his pride,
Hys one fote in the sterope stode,
That other waved besyde.

Hys hode hangynge over hys eyen two,
He rode in symple aray;
A soryer man than he was one
Rode never in somers day.

Lytell Johan was full curteyse,
And set hym on his kne:
Welcome be ye, gentyll knyght,
Welcome are you to me.

Welcome be thou to grene wood,
Hende knyght and fre;
My mayster hath abyden you fastynge,
Syr, all these oures thre.

Who is your mayster? sayd the knyght.
Johan sayde, Robyn Hode.
He is a good yeman, sayd the knyght,
Of hym I have herde moch good.

I graunte, he sayd, with you to wende,
My brethren all in fere;
My purpos was to have deyned to day
At Blythe or Dankastere.

Forthe than went this gentyll knyght,
With a carefull chere,
The teres out of his eyen ran,
And fell downe by his lere.

They brought hym unto the lodge dore,
When Robyn hym gan se,
Full curteysly dyde of his hode,
And set hym on his kne.

Welcome, syr knyght, then sayde Robyn,
Welcome thou arte to me,
I have abyden you fastynge, syr,
All these houris thre.

Then answered the gentyll knyght,
With wordes fayre and fre,
God the save, good Robyn,
And all thy fayre meyne.

They washed togyder and wyped bothe,
And set to theyr dynere;
Brede and wyne they had ynough,
And nombles of the dere;

Swannes and fesauntes they had full good,
And foules of the ryvere;
There fayled never so lytell a byrde,
That ever was bred on bryre.

Do gladly, syr knyght, sayd Robyn,
Gramercy, syr, sayd he,
Suche a dyner had I not
Of all these wekys thre:

If I come agayne, Robyn,
Here by this countre,
As good a dyner I shall the make,
As thou hast made to me.

Gramercy, knyght, sayd Robyn,
My dyner whan that I have;
I was never so gredy, by dere worthy god,
My dyner for to crave.

But pay or ye wende, sayd Robyn,
Me thynketh it is good ryght;
It was never the maner, by dere worthy god,
A yeman to pay for a knyght.

I have nought in my cofers, sayd the knyght,
That I may profer for shame.
Lytell Johan, go loke, sayd Robyn,
Ne let not for no blame.

Tell me trouth, then sayd Robyn,
So god have parte of the.
I have no more but ten shillings, sayd the knyght,
So god have parte of me.

Yf thou have no more, sayd Robyn,
I wyll not one peny;
And yf thou have nede of ony more,
More shall I len the.

Go now forth, Lytell Johan,
The trouthe tell thou me,
Yf there be no more but ten shillings,
Not one peny that I se.

Lytell Johan spred downe his mantell
Full fayre upon the grounde,
And there he founde in the knyghtes cofer
But even halfe a pounde.

Lytyll Johan let it lye full styll,
And went to his mayster full lowe.
What tydynge, Johan? sayd Robyn.
Syr, the knyght is trewe inough.

Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
The knyght shall begynne;
Moch wonder thynketh me
Thy clothynge is so thynne.

Tell me one worde, sayd Robyn,
And counsell shall it be;
I trowe thou werte made a knyght of forse,
Or elles of yemanry;

Or elles thou hast ben a sory housband,
And lyved in stroke and stryfe;
An okerer, or elles a lechoure, sayd Robyn,
With wronge hast thou lede thy lyfe.

I am none of them, sayd the knyght,
By god that made me;
An hondreth wynter here before,
Myne aunsetters knyghtes have be.

But ofte it hath befal, Robyn,
A man hath be dysgrate;
But god that syteth in heven above
May amend his state.

Within two or thre yere, Robyn, he sayd,
My neyghbores well it 'kende,'
Foure hondreth pound of good money
Full wel than myght I spende.

Now have I no good, sayd the knyght,
But my chyldren and my wyfe;
God hath shapen such an ende,
Tyll god 'may amende my lyfe.'

In what maner, sayd Robyn,
Hast thou lorne thy riches?
For my grete foly, he sayd,
And for my kindenesse.

I had a sone, for soth, Robyn,
That sholde have ben myn eyre,
When he was twenty wynter olde,
In felde wolde juste full fayre;

He slewe a knyght of Lancastshyre,
And a squyre bolde;
For to save hym in his ryght
My goodes beth sette and solde;

My londes beth set to wedde, Robyn,
Untyll a certayne daye,
To a ryche abbot here besyde,
Of Saynt Mary abbay.

What is the somme? sayd Robyn,
Trouthe than tell thou me.
Syr, he sayd, foure hondred pounde,
The abbot tolde it to me.

Now, and thou lese thy londe, sayd Robyn,
What shall fall of the?
Hastely I wyll me buske, sayd the knyght,
Over the salte see,

And se where Cryst was quycke and dede,
On the mounte of Caluare.
Fare well, frende, and have good daye,
It may noo better be.

Teeres fell out of his eyen two,
He wolde have gone his waye;
Farewell, frendes, and have good day,
I ne have more to pay.

Where be thy frendes? sayd Robyn.
Syr, never one wyll me know;
Whyle I was ryche ynowe at home
Grete bost then wolde they blowe,

And now they renne awaye fro me,
As bestes on a rowe;
They take no more heed of me
Then they had me never sawe.

For ruthe then wepte Lytell Johan,
Scatheloche and Much in fere;
Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
For here is a symple chere.

Hast thou any frendes, sayd Robyn,
Thy borowes that wyll be?
I have none, then sayd the knyght,
But god that dyed on tree.

Do awaye thy japes, sayd Robyn,
Therof wyll I right none;
Wenest thou I wyll have god to borowe?
Peter, Poule, or Johan?

Nay, by hym that me made,
And shope both sonne and mone,
Fynde a better borowe, sayd Robyn,
Or mony getest thou none.

I have none other, sayd the knyght,
The sothe for to say,
But yf it be our dere lady,
She fayled me never or this day.

By dere worthy god, sayd Robyn,
To seche all Englond thorowe,
Yet founde I never to my pay,
A moch better borowe.

Come now forthe, Lytell Johan,
And goo to my tresoure,
And brynge me foure hondred pounde,
And loke that it well tolde be.

Forthe then wente Lytell Johan,
And Scathelocke went before,
He tolde out foure houndred pounde,
By eyghtene score.

Is this well tolde? said lytell Much.
Johan sayd, what greveth the?
It is almes to helpe a gentyll knyght
That is fall in poverte.

Mayster, then sayd Lytell Johan,
His clothynge is full thynne,
Ye must gyve the knyght a lyveray,
To lappe his body ther in.

For ye have scarlet and grene, mayster,
And many a ryche aray,
There is no marchaunt in mery Englonde
So ryche I dare well saye.

Take hym thre yerdes of every coloure,
And loke that well mete it be.
Lytell Johan toke none other mesure
But his bowe tre,

And of every handfull that he met
He leped footes thre.
What devilkyns draper, sayd litell Much,
Thynkyst thou to be?

Scathelocke stoode full styll and lough,
And sayd, by god allmyght,
Johan may gyve hym the better mesure,
For it costeth him but lyght.

Mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
All unto Robyn Hode,
Ye must gyve that knight an hors,
To lede home al this good.

Take hym a gray courser, sayd Robyn,
And a sadell newe;
He is our ladyes messengere,
God graunt that he be true.

And a good palfraye, sayd lytell Moch,
To mayntayne hym in his ryght.
And a payre of botes, sayd Scathelocke,
For he is a gentyll knyght.

What shalt thou gyve hym, Lytel Johan? sayd
Syr, a payre of gylte spores clene, [Robyn.
To pray for all this company:
God brynge hym out of tene.

When shall my daye be, sayd the knyght,
Syr, and your wyll be?
This daye twelve moneth, sayd Robyn,
Under this grene wode tre.

It were grete shame, sayd Robyn,
A knyght alone to ryde,
Without squyer, yeman or page,
To walke by hys syde.

I shall the lende Lytyll Johan my man,
For he shall be thy knave;
In a yemans stede he may the stonde,
Yf thou grete nede have.

Saxon Huntsman.

He sterte hym to a borde anone,
Tyll a table rounde,
And there he shoke out of a bagge
Even foure hondred pounde.

Fytte II.

Nowe is the knyght went on his way,
This game he thought full good,
When he loked on Bernysdale,
He blyssed Robyn Hode;

And whan he thought on Bernysdale,
On Scathelock, Much, and Johan,
He blyssed them for the best company
That ever he in come.

Then spake that gentyll knyght,
To Lytel Johan gan he saye,
To morowe I must to Yorke toune,
To Saynt Mary abbay;

And to the abbot of that place
Foure hondred pounde I must pay:
And but I be there upon this nyght
My londe is lost for ay.

The abbot sayd to his covent,
There he stode on grounde,
This day twelfe moneth came there a knyght
And borowed foure hondred pounde.

He borowed foure hondred pounde,
Upon all his londe fre.
But he come this yike day
Dysherytye shall he be.

It is full erely, sayd the pryoure,
The day is not yet ferre gone,
I had lever to pay an hondred pounde,
And lay it downe a none.

The knyght is ferre beyonde the see,
In Englonde is his ryght,
And suffreth honger and colde,
And many a sory nyght:

It were grete pyte, said the pryoure,
So to have his londe,
And ye be so lyght of your consepence
Ye do to him moch wronge.

Thou arte euer in my herde, sayd the abbot,
By god and saynt Rycharde,
With that cam in a fat heded monke,
The heygh selerer;

He is dede or hanged, sayd the monke,
By god that bought me dere,
And we shall have to spende in this place
Foure hondred pounde by yere.

The abbot and the hy selerer,
Sterte forthe full bolde,
The high justyce of Englonde
The abbot there dyde holde.

The hye justyce and many mo
Had take into their honde,
Holy all the knyghtes det,
To put that knyght to wronge.

They demed the knyght wonder sore,
The abbot and hys meyne:
But he come this ylke day
Dysheryte shall he be.

He wyll not come yet, sayd the justyce,
I dare well under take.
But in sorowe tyme for them all
The knyght came to the gate.

Then bespake that gentyll knyght
Untyll his meyne,
Now put on your symple wedes
That ye brought fro the see.

They put on their symple wedes,
And came to the gates anone,
The porter was redy hymselfe,
And welcomed them everychone.

Welcome, syr knyght, sayd the porter,
My lord to mete is he,
And so is many a gentyll man,
For the love of the.

The porter swore a full grete othe,
By god that made me,
Here be the best coresed hors
That ever yet sawe I me.

Lede them into the stable, he sayd,
That eased myght they be.
They shall not come therin, sayd the knyght,
By god that dyed on a tre.

Lordes were to mete isette
In that abbotes hall,
The knyght went forth and kneled downe,
And salved them grete and small.

Do gladly, syr abbot, sayd the knyght,
I am come to holde my day.
The fyrst word the abbot spake,
Hast thou brought my pay?

Not one peny, sayd the knyght,
By god that maked me.
Thou art a shrewed dettour, sayd the abbot;
Syr justyce drynke to me.

What doost thou here, sayd the abbot,
But thou haddest brought thy pay?
For god, than sayd the knyght,
To pray of a lenger daye.

Thy daye is broke, sayd the justyce,
Londe getest thou none.
Now, good syr justyce, be my frende,
And sende me of my sone.

I am holde with the abbot, sayd the justyce,
Bothe with cloth and fee.
Now, good syr sheryf, be my frende.
Nay for god, sayd he.

Now, good syr abbot, be my frende,
For thy curteyse,
And holde my londes in thy honde
Tyll I have made the gree;

And I wyll be thy true servaunte,
And trewely serve the,
Tyl ye have four hondred pounde
Of money good and free.

The abbot sware a full grete othe,
By god that dyed on a tre,
Get the londe where thou may,
For thou getest none of me.

By dere worthy god, then sayd the knyght,
That all this worlde wrought,
But I have my londe agayne,
Full dere it shall be bought;

God that was of a mayden borne
Lene us well to spede,
For it is good to assay a frende
Or that a man have nede.

The abbot lothely on hym gan loke
And vylaynesly hym gan call,
Out, he sayd, thou false knyght,
Spede the out of my hall.

Thou lyest, then sayd the gentyll knyght,
Abbot in thy hal;
False knyght was I never,
By god that made us all.

Up then stode that gentyll knyght,
To the abbot sayd he,
To suffre a knyght to knele so longe,
Thou canst no curtesye;

In joustes and in tournement
Full ferre than have I be,
And put myselfe as ferre in prees
As ony that ever I se.

What wyll ye gyve more? sayd the justyce,
And the knyght shall make a releyse;
And elles dare I safly swere
Ye holde never your londe in pees.

An hondred pounde, sayd the abbot.
The justyce said, Gyve him two.
Nay, be god, sayd the knyght,
Yet gete ye it not soo:

Though ye wolde gyve a thousande more,
Yet were ye never the nere;
Shall there never be myne eyre,
Abbot, justyce, ne frere.

He sterte hym to a borde anone,
Tyll a table rounde,
And there he shoke out of a bagge
Even foure hondred pounde.

Have here thy golde, syr abbot, sayd the knyght,
Which that thou lentest me;
Haddest thou ben curteys at my comynge,
Rewarde sholdest thou have be.

The abbot sat styll, and ete no more,
For all his ryall fare,
He cast his hede on his sholder,
And fast began to stare.

Take me my golde agayne, sayd the abbot,
Syr justyce, that I toke the,
Not a peny, sayd the justyce,
By god that dyed on tree.

Syr abbot, and ye men of lawe,
Now have I holde my daye,
Now shall I have my londe agayne,
For ought that you can saye.

The knyght stert out of the dore,
Awaye was all his care,
And on he put his good clothynge,
The other he lefte there.

He wente hym forthe full mery syngynge,
As men have tolde in tale,
His lady met hym at the gate,
At home in Ulversdale.

Welcome, my lorde, sayd his lady;
Syr, lost is all your good?
Be mery, dame, sayd the knyght,
And praye for Robyn Hode,

That ever his soule be in blysse,
He holpe me out of tene;
Ne had not be his kyndenesse,
Beggers had we ben.

The abbot and I acordyd ben,
He is served of his pay,
The good yeman lent it me,
As I came by the way.

This knyght than dwelled fayre at home,
The soth for to say,
Tyll he had got foure hondreth pounde,
All redy for to paye.

He purveyed hym an hondred bowes,
The strenges were y dyght,
An hondred shefe of arowes good,
The hedes burnyshed full bryght,

And every arowe an elle longe,
With pecocke well y dyght,
Inocked all with white sylver,
It was a semly syght.

He purveyed hym an hondreth men,
Well harneysed in that stede,
And hymselfe in that same sete,
And clothed in whyte and rede.

He bare a launsgay in his honde,
And a man ledde his male,
And reden with a lyght songe,
Unto Bernysdale.

As he went at a brydge there was a wrastelyng,
And there taryed was he,
And there was all the best yemen,
Of all the west countree.

A full fayre game there was upset,
A whyte bull up ipyght;
A grete courser with sadle and brydil,
With golde burneysht full bryght;

A payre of gloves, a rede golde ryngе,
A pype of wyne, in fay:
What man bereth him best I wys,
The pryce shall bere away.

There was a yeman in that place,
And best worthy was he,
And for he was ferre and frend bested,
Slayne he sholde have be.

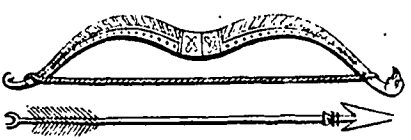
The knyght had ruth of this yeman,
In place where that he stode,
He sayd that yoman sholde have no harme,
For love of Robyn Hode.

The knyght presed into the place,
An hondred folowed hym fre,
With bowes bent, and arowes sharpe,
For to shende that company.

They sholdred all, and made hym rome,
To wete what he wolde say,
He toke the yeman by the honde,
And geve hym all the playe;

He gave hym fyve marke for his wyne,
There it laye on the molde,
And bad it sholde be sette a broche,
Drynke who so wolde.

Thus longe taryed this gentyll knyght,
Tyll that playe was done,
So longe abode Robyn fastynge,
Thre houres after the none.



Saxon Bow and Arrow.

God the save, my dere mayster,
And Cryst the save and see.
Raynolde Grenelefe, sayd the sheryfe,
Where hast thou nowe be?

Fytte III.

Lyth and lysten, gentyll men,
All that now be here,
Of Lytell Johan, that was the knyghtes man,
Good myrthe ye shall here.

It was upon a mery day,
That ponge men wolde go shete,
Lytell Johan fet his bowe anone,
And sayd he wolde them mete.

Thre tymes Lytell Johan shot about,
And alway cleft the wande,
The proude sheryf of Notyngham
By the markes gan stande.

The sheryf swore a full grete othe,
By hym that dyed on a tree,
This man is the best archere
That yet sawe I me.

Say me now, wyght yonge man,
What is now thy name?
In what countre were thou born,
And where is thy wonnynge wan?

In Holdernesse, sir, I was borne,
I wys all of my dame,
Men call me Reynolde Grenelefe,
When I am at hame.

Say me, Reynaud Grenelefe,
Wolde thou dwell with me?
And every yere I wyll the gyve
Twenty marke to thy fee.

I have a mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
A curteys knyght is he,
May ye gete leve of hym,
The better may it bee.

The sheryfe gate Lytell Johan
Twelve monethes of the knyght,
Therefore he gave him ryght anone
A good hors and a wyght.

Now is Lytel Johan the sheryffes man,
He gyve us well to spede,
But alway thought Lytell Johan
To quyte hym well his mede.

Now so god me helpe, sayd Lytel Johan,
And be my trewe leutye,
I shall be the worste servaunte to hym
That ever yet had he.

It befell upon a wednesday,
The sheryfe on huntynge was gone,
And Lytel Johan lay in his bed,
And was forpete at home.

Therfore he was fastynge
Tyl it was past the none.
Good syr stuarde, I pray to the,
Geve me to dyne, sayd Lytel Johan.

It is to long for Grenelefe
Fastynge so long to be;
Therfore I pray the, stuarde,
My dyner gyve thou me.

Shalt thou never ete ne drynke, sayd the stuarde,
Tyll my lord be come to towne.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
I had lever to cracke thy crowne.

The butler was ful uncurteys,
There he stode on flore,
He sterte to the buttery,
And shet fast the dore.

Lytell Johan gave the buteler such a rap,
His backe yede nygh on two,
Tho he lyved an hundreth wynter,
The wors he sholde go.

He sporned the dore with his fote,
It went ope wel and fyne,
And there he made a large lyveray
Both of ale and wyne.

Syth ye wyl not dyne, sayd Lytel Johan,
I shall gyve you to drynke,
And though ye lyve an hondred wynter,
On Lytell Johan ye shall thynk.

Lytell Johan ete, and Lytell Johan dronke,
The whyle that he wolde.
The sheryfe had in his kechyn a coke,
A stoute man and a bolde.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd the coke,
Thou arte a shrewde hynde,
In an housholde to dwel,
For to ask thus to dyne.

And there he lent Lytel Johan
Good strokes thre.
I make myn avowe, sayd Lytell Johan,
These strokes lyketh well me.

Thou arte a bolde man and an hardy,
And so thynketh me;
And or I passe fro this place,
Asayed better shalt thou be.

Lytell Johan drewe a good swerde,
The coke toke another in honde;
They thought nothynge for to fle,
But styfly for to stonde.

There they fought sore to gyder,
Two myle way and more,
Myght neyther other harme done,
The mountenaunce of an houre.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
And be my trewe lewte,
Thou art one of the best swerdemen,
That ever yet sawe I me.

Coowdest thou shote as well in a bowe,
To grene wood thou sholdest with me,
And two tymes in the yere thy clothynge
Chaunged sholde be;

And every yere of Robyn Hode
Twenty marke to thy fee.
Put up thy swerde, sayd the coke,
And felowes wyll we be.

Then he fette to Lytell Johan
The nowmbles of a doo,
Good brede and full good wyne,
They ete and dranke therto.

And whan they had dronken well,
Ther trouthes togyder they plyght,
That they wolde be with Robyn
That yike same day at nyght.

They dyde them to the tresure hous,
As fast as they myght gone,
The lockes that were of good stele
They brake them everychone;

They toke away the sylver vessell,
And all that they myght get,
Peces, masars, ne spones,
Wolde they non forgete;

Also they toke the good pence,
Thre hondred pounde and thre;
And dyde them strayt to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tre.

God the save, my dere mayster,
And Cryst the save and se.
And than sayd Robyn to Lytell Johan,
Welcome myght thou be;

And also be that fayre yeman
Thou bryngest there with the.
What tydynges fro Notyngham?
Lytell Johan tell thou me.

Well the greteth the proude sheryfe,
And sende the here by me
His coke and his sylver vessell,
And thre hondred pounde and thre.

I make myn avow to god, sayd Robyn,
And to the trenyte,
It was never by his good wyll
This good is come to me.

Lytell Johan hym there bethought,
On a shrewed wyle,
Fyve myle in the forest he ran,
Hym happed at his wyll;

Than he met the proud sherpf,
Huntynge with hounde and horne,
Lytell Johan coude his curteysye,
And kneled hym beforne:

God the save, my dere mayster,
And Cryst the save and see.
Raynolde Grenelefe, sayd the sherpfe,
Where hast thou nowe be?

I have be in this forest,
A fayre spght can I se,
It was one of the fayrest spghtes
That ever yet sawe I me;

Yonder I se a ryght fayre hart,
His coloure is of grene,
Seven score of dere upon an herde
Be with hym all bydene;

Their tyndes are so sharp, mayster,
Of sexty and well mo,
That I durst not shote for drede
Lest they wolde me sloo.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd the sherpf,
That spght wolde I fayn se.
Buske you thyderwarde, my dere mayster,
Anone, and wende with me.

The sherpfe rode, and Lytell Johan
Of fote he was full smarte,
And whan they came afore Robyn:
Lo, here is the mayster harte.

Styll stode the proude sheryf,
A sory man was he:
Mo worthe the, Raynolde Grenelefe,
Thou hast now betrayed me.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Lytell Johan,
Mayster, ye be to blame,
I was mysserved of my dynere,
When I was with you at hame.

Soone he was to super sette,
And served with sylver whyte;
And whan the sheryf se his vessell,
For sorowe he myght not ete.

Make good chere, sayd Robyn Hode,
Sheryfe, for charyte,
And for the love of Lytell Johan,
Thy lyfe is graunted to the.

When they had supped well,
The day was all agone,
Robyn commaunded Lytell Johan
To drawe of his hosen and shone,

His kyrtell and his cote of pye,
That was furred well fyne,
And take him a grene mantell,
To lappe his body therin.

Robyn commaunded his wyght yong men,
Under the grene wood tre,
They shall lay in that same sute;
That the sheryf myght them se.

All nyght lay that proud sheryf,
In his breche and in his sherte,
No wonder it was in grene wode,
Tho his sydes gan to smerte.

Make glad chere, sayd Robyn Hode,
Sheryfe, for charyte,
For this is our order I wys,
Under the grene wood tre.

This is harder order, sayd the sheryfe,
Than ony anker or frere;
For al the golde in mery Englonde
I wolde not longe dwell here.

All these twelve monthes, sayd Robyn,
Thou shalte dwell with me;
I shall the teche, proud sheryfe,
An outlawe for to be.

Or I here another nyght lye, sayd the sheryfe,
Robyn, nowe I praye the,
Smyte of my hede rather to morowe,
And I forgyve it the.

Lete me go, then sayd the sheryf,
For saynt Charyte,
And I wyll be thy best frende
That ever yet had the.

Thou shalte swere me an othe, sayd Robyn,
On my bryght bronde,
Thou shalt never awayte me scathe,
By water ne by londe;

And if thou fynde ony of my men,
By nyght or by day,
Upon thyne othe thou shalt swere,
To helthe them that thou may.

Now have the sheryf sworne his othe,
And home he began to gone,
He was as full of grene wode
As ever was hepe of stone.

Norman Archers.

Aske to drinke, then sayd Robyn,
Or that ye forther ride.

Fytte IV.

The sheryf dwelled in Notynghame,
He was fayne that he was gone,
And Robyn and his mery men
Went to wode anone.

Go we to dyner, sayd Lytell Johan.
Robyn Hode sayd, Nay;
For I drede our lady be wroth with me,
For she sent me not my pay.

Have no dout, mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
Yet is not the sonne at rest,
For I dare saye, and saufly swere,
The knyght is trewe and trust.

Take thy bowe in thy hande, sayd Robyn,
Let Moch wende with the,
And so shall Wyllyam Scathelock,
And no man abyde with me,

And walke up into the Sayles,
And to Watlynge strete,
And wayte after some unketh gest,
Up chaunce ye may them mete.

Whether he be messengere,
Or a man that myrthes can,
Or yf he be a pore man,
Of my good he shall have some.

Forth then stert Lytel Johan,
Halt in tray and tene,
And gyrde hym with a full good swerde,
Under a mantel of grene.

They went up to the Sayles,
These yemen all thre;
They loked est, they loked west,
They myght no man se.

But as they loked in Bernysdale,
By the hye waye,
Than were they ware of two blacke monkes,
Eche on a good palferay.

Then bespake Lytell Johan,
To Much he gan say,
I dare lay my lyfe to wedde,
That these monkes have brought our pay.

Make glad chere, sayd Lytell Johan,
And frese our bowes of ewe,
And loke your hertes be seker and sad,
Your strynges trusty and trewe.

The monke hath fifty two men,
And seven somers full stronge,
There rydeth no bysshop in this londe
So ryally, I understond.

Brethern, sayd Lytell Johan,
Here are no more but we thre;
But we brynge them to dyner,
Our maysters dare we not se.

Bende your bowes, sayd Lytell Johan,
Make all yon prese to stonde,
The formost monke, his lyfe and his deth
Is closed in my honde.

Abyde, chorle monke, sayd Lytell Johan,
No ferther that thou gone;
Yf thou doost, by dere worthy god,
Thy deth is in my honde.

And evyll thryfte on thy hede, sayd Lytell Johan,
Ryght under thy hattes bonde,
For thou hast made our mayster wroth,
He is fastynge so longe.

Who is your mayster? sayd the monke.
Lytell Johan sayd, Robyn Hode.
He is a stronge thefe, sayd the monke,
Of hym herd I never good.

Thou lyest, than sayd Lytell Johan,
And that shall rewe the;
He is a yeman of the forest,
To dyne he hath bode the.

Much was redy with a bolte,
Redly and a none,
He set the monke to fore the brest,
To the grounde that he can gone.

Of fyfty two wyght yonge men,
There abode not one,
Saf a lytell page, and a grome
To lede the somers with Johan.

They brought the monke to the lodge dore,
Whether he were loth or lefe,
For to speke with Robyn Hode,
Maugre in theyr tethe.

Robyn dyde adowne his hode,
The monke whan that he se;
The monke was not so curteyse,
His hode then let he be.

He is a chorle, mayster, by dere worthy god,
Than said Lytell Johan.
Thereof no fors, sayd Robyn,
For curteysy can he none.

How many men, sayd Robyn,
Had this monke, Johan?
Fyfty and two whan that we met,
But many of them be gone.

Let blowe a horne, sayd Robyn,
That felaushyp may us knowe;
Seven score of wyght yemen,
Came pryckynge on a rowe,

And everych of them a good mantell,
Of scarlet and of raye,
All they came to good Robyn,
To wyte what he wolde say.

They made the monke to wasshe and wype,
And syt at his denere,
Robyn Hode and Lytel Johan
They served him bothe in fere.

Do gladly, monke, sayd Robyn,
Gramercy, syr, said he.
Where is your abbay, when ye are at home,
And who is your avowe?

Saynt Mary abbay, sayd the monke,
Though I be symple here.
In what offyce? sayd Robyn.
Syr, the hye selerer.

Ye be the more welcome, sayd Robyn.
So ever mote I the.
Fyll of the best wyne, sayd Robyn,
This monke shall drynke to me.

But I have grete mervayle, sayd Robyn,
Of all this longe day,
I drede our lady be wroth with me,
She sent me not my pay.

Have no doute, mayster, sayd Lytell Johan,
Be have no nede I saye,
This monke it hath brought, I dare well swere,
For he is of her abbay.

And she was a borowe, sayd Robyn,
Betwene a knyght and me,
Of a lytell money that I hym lent,
Under the grene wode tree;

And yf thou hast that sylver ibroughte,
I praye the let me se,
And I shall helpe the eft sones,
Yf thou hast nede of me.

The monke swore a full grete othe,
With a sory chere,
Of the borowehode thou spekest to me,
Herde I never ere.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Monke, thou arte to blame,
For god is holde a ryghtwys man,
And so is his dame.

Thou toldest with thyn owne tonge,
Thou may not say nay,
How thou arte her servaunt,
And servest her every day.

And thou art made her messengere,
My money for to pay,
Therfore I cun the more thanke,
Thou arte come at thy day.

What is in your cofers? sayd Robyn,
Trewe than tell thou me.
Syr, he sayd, twenty marke,
Al so mote I the.

Yf there be no more, sayd Robyn,
I wyll not one peny;
Yf thou hast myster of ony more,
Syr, more I shall lende to the;

And yf I fynde more, sayd Robyn,
I wys thou shalte it forgone;
For of thy spendynge sylver, monk,
Therof wyll I ryght none.

Go nowe forthe, Lytell Johan,
And the trouth tell thou me;
If there be no more but twenty marke,
No peny that I se.

Lytell Johan spred his mantell downe,
As he had done before,
And he tolde out of the monkes male,
Eyght hundreth pounde and more.

Lytell Johan let it lye full styll,
And went to his mayster in hast;
Syr, he sayd, the monke is trewe ynowe,
Our lady hath doubled your cost.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Monke, what tolde I the?
Our lady is the trewest woman,
That ever yet founde I me.

By dere worthy god, sayd Robyn,
To seche all Englond thorowe,
Yet founde I never to my pay
A moche better borowe.

Fyll of ye best wyne, do hym drynke, sayd Robyn,
And grete well thy lady hende,
And yf she have nede of Robyn Hode,
A frende she shall hym fynde;

And yf she nedeth ony more syluer,
Come thou agayne to me,
And by this token she hath me sent,
She shall have such thre.

The monke was going to London ward,
There to holde grete mote,
The knyght that rode so hye on hors,
To brynge hym under fote.

Whether be ye away? sayd Robyn.
Syr, to maners in this londe,
To reken with our reues,
That have done moch wronge.

Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And harken to my tale,
A better yeman I knowe none,
To seke a monkes male.

How moch is in yonder other cofer? sayd Robyn,
The soth must we see.
By our lady, than sayd the monke,
That were no curtesye,

To bydde a man to dyner,
And syth hym bete and bynde.
It is our olde maner, sayd Robyn,
To leve but lytell behynde.

The monke toke the hors with spore,
No lenger wolde he abyde.
Aske to drynke, then sayd Robyn,
Or that ye forther ryde.

Nay, for god, then sayd the monke,
Me reweth I cam so nere,
For better chepe I myght have dyned,
In Blythe or in Dankestere.

Grete well your abbot, sayd Robyn,
And your pryour, I you pray,
And byd him sende me such a monke,
To dyner every day.

Now lete we that monke be styll,
And speke we of that knyght,
Yet he came to holde his day
Whyle that it was lyght.

He dyde him streyt to Bernysdale,
Under the grene wode tre,
And he founde there Robyn Hode,
And all his merry meyne.

The knight lyght downe of his good palfray,
Robyn whan he gan see,
So curteysly he dyde adoune his hode,
And set hym on his knee.

God the save, good Robyn Hode,
And al this company.
Welcome be thou, gentyll knyght,
And ryght welcome to me.

Then bespake hym Robyn Hode,
To that knyght so fre,
What nede dryveth the to grene wode?
I pray the, syr knyght, tell me.

And welcome be thou, gentyl knyght,
Why hast thou be so longe?
For the abbot and the hye justyce
Wolde have had my londe.

Hast thou thy lond agayne? sayd Robyn,
Treuth than tell thou me.
Ye, for god, sayd the knyght,
And that thanke I god and the.

But take not a grefe, I have be so longe;
I came by a wrastelynge,
And there I dyd holpe a poor yeman,
With wronge was put behynde.

Nay, for god, sayd Robyn,
Syr knyght, that thanke I the;
What man that helpeth a good yeman,
His frende than wyll I be.

Have here foure hondred pounde, than sayd the knyght,
The whiche ye lent to me;
And here is also twenty marke
For your curtesy.

Nay, for god, than sayd Robyn,
Thou broke it well for ay,
For our lady, by her sclerer,
Hath sent to me my pay;

And yf I toke it twyse,
A shame it were to me:
But trewely, gentyll knyght,
Welcom arte thou to me.

Whan Robyn had tolde his tale,
He leugh and had good chere.
By my trouthe, then sayd the knyght,
Your money is redy here.

Broke it well, sayd Robyn,
Thou gentyll knyght so fre;
And welcome be thou, gentill knyght,
Under my trystell tree.

But what shall these bowes do? sayd Robyn,
And these arowes ifedered fre?
By god, than sayd the knyght,
A pore present to the.

Come now forth, Lytell Johan,
And go to my treasure,
And brynge me there foure hondred pounde,
The monke over tolde it me.

Have here foure hondred pounde,
Thou gentyll knyght and trewe.
And bye hors and harnes good,
And gylte thy spores all newe:

And yf thou fayle ony spendynge,
Com to Robyn Hode,
And by my trouth thou shalt none fayle
The whyles I have any good.

And broke well thy four hundred pound,
Whiche I lent to the,
And make thy selfe no more so bare,
By the counsell of me.

Thus than holpe hym good Robyn
The knyght all of his care.
God, that sytteth in heven hye,
Graunte us well to fare.

Archer of the 13th Century.

Up he toke him on his backe,
And bare hym well a myle,
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle.

Fytte V.

Now hath the knyght his leve itake,
And wente hym on his way;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
Dwelled styll full many a day.

Lyth and lysten, gentil men,
And herken what I shall say,
How the proud sheryfe of Notyngham
Dyde crye a full fayre play;

That all the best archers of the north
Sholde come upon a day,
And they that shoteth alder best
The game shall bere away.

He that shoteth alder best
Furthest fayre and lowe,
At a payre of fynly buttes,
Under the grene wode shawe,

A ryght good arowe he shall have,
The shaft of sylver whyte,
The heade and the feders of ryche rede golde,
In Englond is none lyke.

This then herde good Robyn,
Under his trystell tre:
Make you redy, ye wyght yonge men,
That shotynge wyll I se.

Buske you, my mery yonge men,
Ye shall go with me;
And I wyll wete the shrydes fayth,
Trewe and yf he be.

Whan they had theyr bowes ibent,
Theyr takles fedred fre,
Seven score of wyght yonge men
Stode by Robyns kne.

Whan they cam to Notyngham,
The buttes were fayre and longe,
Many was the bold archere
That shoted with bowes stronge.

There shall but syx shote with me,
The other shal kepe my hede,
And stande with good bowes bent
That I be not deceyved.

The fourth outlawe his bow gan bende,
And that was Robyn Hode,
And that beheld the proude sheryfe,
All by the but he stode.

Thryes Robyn shot about,
And alway he slist the wand,
And so dyde good Gylberte,
With the whyte hande.

Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke
Were archers good and fre;
Lytell Much and good Reynolde,
The worste wolde they not be.

When they had shot aboute,
These archours fayre and good,
Evermore was the best,
Forsoth, Robyn Hode.

Hym was delyvered the goode arow,
For best worthy was he;
He toke the yeft so curteysly,
To grene wode wolde he.

They cryed out on Robyn Hode,
And great hornes gan they blowe,
Wo worth the, treason, sayd Robyn,
Full evyl thou art to knowe.

And wo be thou, thou proud sheryf,
Thus gladdynge thy gest,
Other wyse thou behote me
In yonder wylde forest;

But had I the in grene wode,
Under my trystell tre,
Thou sholdest leve me a better wedde
Than thy trewe lewte.

Full many a bowe there was bent,
And arowes let they glyde,
Many a kyrtell there was rent,
And hurt many a syde.

The outlawes shot was so stronge,
That no man myght them dryve,
And the proud sherefes men
They fled away full blyve.

Robyn sawe the busshement to broke,
In grene wode he wolde have be,
Many an arowe there was shot
Amonge that company.

Lytell Johan was hurte full sore,
With an arowe in his kne,
That he myght neyther go nor ryde;
It was full grete pyte.

Mayster, then sayd Lytell Johan,
If ever thou lovest me,
And for that ylke lordes love,
That dyed upon a tre,

And for the medes of my servyce,
That I have served the,
Lete never the proude sheryf
Alyve now fynde me;

But take out thy browne swerde,
And smyte all of my hede,
And gyve me woundes dede and wyde,
No lyfe on me be lefte.

I wolde not that, sayd Robyn,
Johan, that thou were slawe,
For all the golde in mery Englond,
Though it lay now on a rawe.

God forbede, sayd lytell Much,
That dyed on a tre,
That thou sholdest, Lytell Johan,
Parte our company.

Up he toke him on his backe,
And bare hym well a myle,
Many a tyme he layd hym downe,
And shot another whyle.

Then was there a fayre castell,
A lytell within the wode,
Double dyched it was about,
And walled, by the rode:

And there dwelled that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee,
That Robyn had lent his good,
Under the grene wode tree.

In he toke good Robyn,
And all his company:
Welcome be thou, Robyn Hode,
Welcome arte thou to me;

And moche I thanke the of thy confort,
And of thy curteysye,
And of thy grete kyndenesse,
Under the grene wode tre;

I love no man in all this worlde
So moche as I do the;
For all the proud sheryf of Notyngham,
Ryght here shalt thou be.

Shyt the gates, and drawe the bridge,
And let no man com in;
And arme you well and make you redy,
And to the walle ye wynne.

For one thyng, Robyn, I the behote,
I swere by saynt Quyntyn,
These twelve dayes thou wonest with me,
To suppe, ete, and dyne.

Bordes were layed, and clothes spred,
Reddely and anone;
Robyn Hode and his mery men
To mete gan they gone.

Ladies Hunting, 14th Century.

God the save, good Robyn Hode,
And all thy company;
For our dere ladyes love,
A bone graunte thou me.

Fytte VI.

Lythe and lysten, gentylmen,
And herken unto your sonne,
How the proude sheryfe of Notyngham,
And men of armes stronge,

Full faste came to the hye sheryfe,
The countre up to rout,
And they beset the knyghts castell,
The walles all about.

The proude sheryf loude gan crye,
And sayd, Thou traytour knyght,
Thou kepeste here the kynges enemye,
Agayne the lawes and ryght.

Syr, I wyll avowe that I have done,
The dedes that here be dyght,
Upon all the londes that I have,
As I am a trewe knyght.

Wende forthe, syrs, on your waye,
And doth no more to me,
Tyll ye wytte our kynges wyll
What he woll say to the.

The sheref thus had his answere,
With out ony leasynge,
Forthe he yode to London toune,
All for to tel our kynge.

There he tolde him of that knyght,
And eke of Robyn Hode,
And also of the bolde archeres,
That noble were and good.

He wolde avowe that he had done,
To mayntayne the outlawes stronge,
He wolde be lorde, and set you at nought,
In all the north londe.

I woll be at Notyngham, sayd the kynge,
Within this fourtynyght,
And take I wyll Robyn Hode,
And so I wyll that knyght.

Go home, thou proud sheryf,
And do as I bydde the,
And ordayne good archeres inowe,
Of all the wyde countree.

The sheryf had his leve itake,
And went hym on his way;
And Robyn Hode to grene wode,
Upon a certayn day;

And Lytell Johan was hole of the arowe,
That shote was in his kne,
And dyde hym strayte to Robyn Hode,
Under the grene wode tre.

Robyn Hode walked in the foreste,
Under the leves grene,
The proud sheryfe of Notyngham
Therefore he had grete tene.

The sheryf there tayled of Robyn Hode,
He myght not have his pray,
Then he awayted that gentyll knyght,
Bothe by nyght and by daye.

Ever he awayted that gentyll knyght,
Syr Rychard at the Lee;
As he went on haukynge by the ryver syde,
And let his haukes flee,

Toke he there his gentyll knyght,
With men of armes stronge,
And lad hym home to Notyngham warde,
Ibonde both fote and honde.

The sheryf swore a full grete othe,
By hym that dyed on a tre,
He had lever than an hondrede pounde,
That Robyn Hode had he.

Then the lady, the knyghtes wyfe,
A fayre lady and fre,
She set her on a gode palfray,
To grene wode anon rode she.

When she came to the forest,
Under the grene wode tre,
Foundè she there Robyn Hode,
And all his fayre meyne.

God the save, good Robyn Hode,
And all thy company;
For our dere ladyes love,
A bone graunte thou me.

Let thou never my wedded lorde
Shamfully slayne to be;
He is fast ibounde to Notyngham warde,
For the love of the.

Anone then sayd good Robyn,
To that lady fre,
What man hath your lorde itake?
The proude shirife, than sayd she.

The proude sheryfe hath hym itake,
Forsoth as I the say;
He is not yet thre myles,
Passed on his waye.

Up then sterte good Robyn,
As a man that had he wode:
Buske you, my mery younge men,
For hym that dyed on a rode;

And he that this sorowe forsaketh,
By hym that dyed on a tre,
And by him that al thinges maketh,
No lenger shall dwell with me.

Sone there were good bowes ibent,
Mo than seven score,
Hedge ne dyche spared they none,
That was them before.

I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
The knyght wolde I fayn se,
And yf I may hym take,
Iquyt than shall he bee.

And whan they came to Notyngham,
They walked in the strete,
And with the proud sheryf, I wys,
Sone gan they mete.

Abyde, thou proud sheryf, he sayd,
Abyde and speake with me,
Of some tydynges of our kynge,
I wolde fayne here of the.

This seven yere, by dere worthy god,
Ne yede I so fast on fote,
I make myn avowe to god, thou proud sheryfe,
It is not for thy good.

Robyn bent a good bowe,
An arrowe he drewe at his wyll,
He hyt so the proud sheryf,
Upon the grounde he lay full styll;

And or he myght up aryse,
On his fete to stonde,
He smote of the sherydes hede,
With his bryght bronde.

Lye thou there, thou proud sheryf,
Evyll mote thou thryve;
There myght no man to the trust,
The whyles thou were alyve.

His men drewe out theyr bryght swerdes,
That were so sharpe and kene,
And layde on the sherydes men,
And dryved them downe by dene.

Robyn stert to that knyght,
And cut a two his bonde,
And toke him in his hand a bowe,
And bade hym by hym stonde.

Leve thy hors the behynde,
And lerne for to renne;
Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Through myre, mosse and fenne;

Thou shalt with me to grene wode,
Without ony leasynge,
Tyll that I have gete us grace,
Of Edwarde our comly kynge.

Practising with the Cross bow.

Robyn behelde our comly kynge
Wystly in the face,
So dyde syr Richarde at the Le,
And kneled downe in that place.

Fytte VIII.

The kynge came to Notynghame,
With knyghtes in grete araye,
For to take that gentyll knyght,
And Robyn Hode, yf he may.

He asked men of that countre,
After Robyn Hode,
And after that gentyll knyght,
That was so bolde and stout.

Whan they had tolde hym the case,
Our kynge understonde ther tale,
And seased in his honde,
The knyghtes londes all,

All the passe of Lancasshyre,
He went both ferre and nere,
Tyll he came to Plomton parke,
He faylyd many of his dere.

There our kynge was wont to se
Herdes many one,
He could unneth fynde one dere,
That bare ony good horne.

The kynge was wonder wroth with all,
And swore by the trynyte,
I wolde I had Robyn Hode,
With eyen I myght hym se;

And he that wolde smyte of the knyghtes hede,
And brynge it to me,
He shall have the knyghtes londes,
Syr Rycharde at the Le;

I gyve it hym with my charter,
And sele it with my honde,
To have and holde for ever more,
In all mery Englonde.

Then bespake a fayre olde knyght,
That was treue in his fay,
A, my lege lorde the kynge,
One worde I shall you say;

There is no man in this countre
May have the knyghtes londes,
Whyle Robyn Hode may ryde or gone,
And bere a bowe in his hondes;

That he ne shall lese his hede,
That is the best ball in his hode:
Give it no man, my lorde the kynge,
That ye wyll any good.

Half a yere dwelled our comly kynge
In Notyngham, and well more,
Coude he not here of Robyn Hode,
In what countre that he were;

But alway went good Robyn
By halke and eke by hyll,
And alway slewe the kynges dere,
And welt them at his wyll.

Than bespake a proude fostere,
That stode by our kynges kne,
If ye wyll se good Robyn,
Ye must do after me;

Take fyve of the best knyghtes
That be in your lede,
And walke downe by yon abbay,
And gete you monkes wede.

And I wyll be your ledes man
And lede you the way,
And or ye come to Notyngham,
Myn hede then dare I lay,

That ye shall mete with good Robyn,
On lyve yf that he be,
Or ye come to Notyngham,
With eyen ye shall hym se.

Full hastly our kynge was dyght,
So were his knyghtes fyve,
Everych of them in monkes wede,
And hasted them thyder blyth.

Our kynge was grete above his cole,
A brode hat on his crowne,
Ryght as he were abbot lyke,
They rode up in to the towne.

Styf botes our kynge had on,
Forsoth as I you say,
He rode syngynge to grene wode,
The covent was clothed in graye.

His male hors, and his grete somers,
Folowed our kynge be hynde,
Tyll they came to grene wode,
A myle under the lynde.

There they met with good Robyn,
Stondynge on the waye,
And so dyde many a bolde archere,
For soth as I you say.

Robyn toke the kynges hors,
Hastely in that stede,
And sayd, Syr abbot, by your leve,
A whyle ye must abyde;

We be yemen of this foreste,
Under the grene wode tre,
We lyve by our kynges dere,
Other shyft have not we;

And ye have chyrches and rentes both,
And gold full grete plente;
Gyve us some of your spendynge,
For saynt Charyte.

Than bespake our cumly kynge,
Anone than sayd he,
I brought no more to grene wode,
But forty pounde with me;

I have layne at Notyngham,
This fourtynyght with our kynge,
And spent I have full moche good,
On many a grete lordynge;

And I have but forty pounde,
No more than have I me,
But yf I had an hondred pounde,
I would geve it to the.

Robyn toke the forty pounde,
And departed it in two partye,
Halfendell he gave his mery men,
And bad them mery to be.

Full curteysly Robyn gan say,
Syr, have this for your spendyng,
We shall mete a nother day.
Gramercy, than sayd our kynge;

But well the greteth Edwarde our kynge,
And sent to the his seale,
And byddeth the com to Notyngham,
Both to mete and mele.

He toke out the brode tarpe,
And sone he let hym se;
Robyn coud his courteysy,
And set hym on his kne:

I love no man in all the worlde
So well as I do my kynge,
Welcome is my lordes seale;
And, monke, for thy tydynge,

Syr abbot, for thy tydynges,
To day thou shalt dyne with me
For the love of my kynge
Under my trystell tre.

Forth he lad our comly kynge,
Full fayre by the honde,
Many a dere there was slayne,
And full fast dyghtande.

Robyn toke a full grete horne,
And loude he gan blowe,
Seven score of wyght yonge men,
Came redy on a rowe.

All they kneeled on theyr kne,
Full fayre before Robyn.
The kynge sayd hymselfe untyll,
And swore by saynt Austyn,

Here is a wonder semely syght,
Me thynketh, by goddes pyne;
His men are more at his byddynge,
Then my men be at myn.

Full hastly was theyr dyner idyght,
And therto gan they gone,
They served our kynge with al theyr myght,
Both Robyn and Lytell Johan.

Anone before our kynge was set
The fatte venyson,
The good whyte brede, the good red wyne,
And therto the fyne ale browne.

Make good chere, sayd Robyn,
Abbot, for charyte;
And for this ylke tydynge,
Blyssed mote thou be.

Now shalte thou se what lyfe we lede,
Or thou hens wende,
Than thou may enfourme our kynge,
Whan ye togyder lende.

Up they sterte all in hast,
Theyr bowes were smartly bent,
Our kynge was never so sore agast,
He wende to have be shente.

Two yerdes there were up set,
There to gan they gange;
By fifty pase, our kynge sayd,
The merkes were to longe.

On every syde a rose garlonde,
They shot under the lyne.
Who so fayleth of the rose garlonde, sayd Robyn,
His takyll he shall tyne,

And yelde it to his mayster,
Be it never so fyne,
For no man wyll I spare,
So drynke I ale or wyne.

And bere a buffet on his hede,
I wys ryght all bare.
And all that fell in Robyns lote,
He smote them wonder sare.

Twyse Robyn shot aboute,
And ever he clefed the wande,
And so dyde good Gylberte,
With the whyte hand;

Lytell Johan and good Scatheloke,
For nothyng wolde they spare,
When they fayled of the garlonde,
Robyn smote them full sare:

At the last shot that Robyn shot,
For all his frendes fare,
Yet he fayled of the garlonde,
Thre fyngers and mare.

Than bespake good Gylberte,
And thus he gan say,
Mayster, he sayd, your takyll is lost,
Stand forth and take your pay.

If it be so, sayd Robyn,
That may no better be;
Syr abbot, I delyver the myn arowe,
I pray the, syr, serve thou me.

It falleth not for myn order, sayd our kynge,
Robyn, by thy leve,
For to smyte no good yeman,
For doute I sholde hym greve.

Smyte on boldely, sayd Robyn,
I give the large leve.
Anone our kynge, with that worde,
He folde up his sleve,

And sych a buffet he gave Robyn,
To grounde he yede full nere.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
Thou arte a stalworthe frere;

There is pith in thyn arme, sayd Robyn,
I trowe thou canst well shote.
Thus our kynge and Robyn Hode
Togeder than they met.

Robyn behelde our comly kynge
Mystly in the face,
So dyde syr Richarde at the Le,
And kneled downe in that place;

And so dyde all the wylde outlawes,
Whan they se them knele.
My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Now I knowe you well.

Mercy, then Robyn sayd to our kynge,
Under your trystyll tre,
Of thy goodnesse and thy grace
For my men and me.

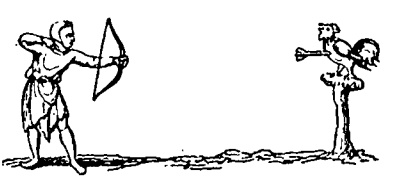
Yes, for god, sayd Robyn,
And also god me save;
I aske mercy, my lorde the kynge,
And for my men I crave.

Yes, for god, than sayd our kynge,
Thy petition I graunt the,
With that thou leve the grene wode,
And all thy company;

And come home, syr, to my courte,
And there dwell with me.
I make myn avowe to god, sayd Robyn,
And ryght so shall it be;

I wyll come to your courte,
Your servyse for to se,
And brynge with me of my men
Seven score and thre.

But me lyke well your servyse,
I come agayne full soone,
And shote at the donne dere,
As I am wonte to done.



Archery, the 14th Century.

Robyn slewe a full grete harte,
His horne than gan he blow,
That all the outlawes of that forest,
That horne coud they knowe.

Fytte VIII.

Haste thou ony grene cloth, sayd our kynge,
That thou wylte sell nowe to me.
Ye, for god, sayd Robyn,
Thyrty yerdes and thre.

Robyn, sayd our kynge,
Now pray I the,
To sell me some of that cloth,
To me and my meyne.

Yes, for god, then sayd Robyn,
Or elles I were a fole;
A nother day ye wyll me clothe,
I trowe, ayenst the Yole.

The kynge kest of his cote then,
A grene garment he dyde on,
And every knyght had so, I wys,
They clothed them full soone.

When they were clothed in Lyncolne grene,
They kest away theyr graye.
Now we shall to Notyngham,
All thus our kynge gan say.

Theyr bowes bente and forth they went,
Shotynge all in fere,
Towarde the towne of Notyngham,
Outlawes as they were.

Our kynge and Robyn rode togyder,
For soth as I you say,
And they shote plucke bucket,
As they went by the way;

And many a bucket our kynge wan
Of Robyn Hode that day;
And nothynge spared good Robyn
Our kynge in his pay.

So god me helpe, sayd our kynge,
Thy game is nought to lere,
I sholde not get a shote of the,
Though I shote all this yere.

All the people of Notyngham
They stode and behelde,
They sawe nothynge but mantels of grene,
That covered all the felde;

Than every man to other gan say,
I drede our kynge be slone;
Come Robyn Hode to the towne, I wys,
On lyve he leveth not one.

Full hastly they began to fle,
Both yemen and knaves,
And olde wyves that myght evyll goo,
They hypped on theyr staves.

The kynge loughe full fast,
And commanded theym agayne;
When they se our comly kynge,
I wys they were full fayne.

They ete and dranke, and made them glad,
And sange with notes hye.
Than bespake our comly kynge,
To syr Rycharde at the Lee:

He gave hym there his londe agayne,
A good man he bad hym be.
Robyn thanked our comly kynge,
And set hym on his kne.

Had Robyn dwelled in the kynges courte,
But twelve monethes and thre,
That he had spent an hondred pounde,
And all his mennes fe.

In every place where Robyn came,
Ever more he layde downe,
Both for knyghtes and for squyres,
To gete hym grete renowne.

By than the yere was all agone,
He had no man but twayne,
Lytell Johan and good Scathelocke,
Wyth him all for to gone.

Robyn sawe yonge men shote,
Full fayre upon a day,
Alas, than sayd good Robyn,
My welthe is went away.

Somtyme I was an archere good,
A styffe and eke a stronge,
I was commytted the best archere,
That was in mery Englonde.

Alas, then sayd good Robyn,
Alas and well a woo,
Yf I dwele lenger with the kynge,
Sorowe wyll me sloo.

Forth than went Robyn Hode,
Tyll he came to our kynge:
My lorde the kynge of Englonde,
Graunte me myn askynge.

I made a chapell in Bernysdale,
That semely is to se,
It is of Mary Magdalene,
And thereto wolde I be;

I myght never in this seven nyght,
No time to slepe ne wynke,
Nother all these seven dayes,
Nother ete ne drynke.

Me longeth sore to Bernysdale,
I may not be therfro,
Barefote and wolwarde I have hyght
Thyder for to go.

Yf it be so, than sayd our kynge,
It may no better be;
Seven nyght I gyve the leve,
No lengre, to dwell fro me.

Gramercy, lorde, then sayd Robyn,
And set hym on his kne;
He toke his leve full courteysly,
To grene wode then went he.

Whan he came to grene wode,
In a mery mornynge,
There he herde the notes small
Of byrdes mery syngynge.

It is ferre gone, sayd Robyn,
That I was last here,
Me lyste a lytell for to shote,
At the donne dere.

Robyn slewe a full grete harte,
His horne than gan he blow,
That all the outlawes of that forest,
That horne coud they knowe,

And gadred them togyder,
In a lytell throwe,
Seven score of wight yonge men,
Came redy on a rowe;

And fayre dyde of theyr hodes,
And set them on theyr kne:
Welcome, they sayd, our mayster,
Under this grene wode tre.

Robyn dwelled in grene wode,
Twenty yere and two,
For all drede of Edwarde our kynge,
Agayne wolde he not goo.

Yet he was begyled, I wys,
Through a wycked woman,
The pryoresse of Kyrkesley,
That nye was of his kynne,

For the love of a knyght,
Syr Roger of Donkester,
That was her owne speciall,
Full evyll mote they fare,

They toke togyder theyr counsell
Robyn Hode for to sle,
And how they myght best do that dede,
His banis for to be.

Than bespake good Robyn,
In place where as he stode,
To morow I muste to Kyrkesley,
Craftely to be leten blode.

Syr Roger of Donkestere,
By the pryoresse he lay,
And there they betrayed good Robyn Hode,
Through theyr false playe.

Cryst have mercy on his soule,
That dyed on the rode,
For he was a good outlawe,
And dyde pore men moch good.

Hunting Dresses, 16th Century.

THE LYTELL GESTE OF ROBIN HOOD.

A NEW VERSION.

THE following new version of the *Lytell Geste* was composed by the REV. JOHN EAGLES, M.A., formerly of Wadham College, Oxford, an old and highly-valued friend of the editor's, who had consulted him on the publication of these volumes. Mr. Eagles was till then unacquainted with the contents of this legend; but on its perusal was so struck with its many beauties, that he thought it ought not to remain in its antiquated form and language, accessible only to the lovers of black-letter literature. He accordingly volunteered the attempt to turn the *Lytell Geste* into somewhat more modern and popular language; preserving, at the same time, as much as possible, the spirit and phraseology of the original. That he has caught the spirit of the original, and happily succeeded in preserving the ballad style, must be apparent to the most fastidious critic; and the editor cannot help thinking, that if public patronage and approbation should be bestowed on these volumes, it will mainly be owing to his friend having enabled him to publish this new version.

The editor ought also to add, that the subjects of many of the wood-cuts which adorn the volumes, were suggested and sketched by his friend, particularly those of the woodland scenes in the different fyttes of the new version of the *Lytell Geste*. That he has had the advice and assistance of such an excellent classical scholar, poet, painter, and prose writer, as the translator of Homer's Hymns, &c. &c., as well as the author of those inimitable papers in *Blackwood's Magazine*, bearing the signature of the SKETCHER, is a subject to him of the highest pride and gratification.

THE LYTELL GESTE OF ROBIN HOOD.

FYTTE THE FIRST.

O LISTEN to me all ye so free
That are of gentle blood,
The while I tell of a bold yeoman,
His name it was Robin Hood.

This Robin he was an outlaw proud;
While'er he walked on ground;
An outlaw of better courtesy
Than Robin was never found.

Robin stood in Bernysdale
And lean'd him against a tree,
And at his side stood Little John,
And a yeoman good was he.

And there good Scathelock stood beside,
And Mutch the miller's son;
Of whose stout body there wasn't an inch,
But 'twas worth a whole man each one.

Then Little John to his master spake,
All unto Robin Hood:
Master, methinks, would you dine betime,
Your dinner would do you good.

Oh no! then answer'd Robin Hood,
Little need have I to dine,
Until I have some bold baron,
Or stranger guest be mine.

Or be he some earl or abbot,
That may pay me for the best;
Or be he some knight, or be he squire,
That dwelleth here by the west.

Now a custom good had Robin Hood
In lands both far and near,
Every day before he would dine
Three masses would he hear.

The one to worship the Father,
And one the Holy Ghost,
The third was of our dear Ladye,
For he loved her of all the most.

Robin, he loved our dear Ladye,
For dread of deadly sin;
For her sake would he no company harm
That any woman was in.

Master, then said Little John,
As we spread our board, 'twere need,
That you tell us whitherward we shall go,
What life it is we should lead.

Where we shall take, where we shall leave,
And where abide behind;
And where too we shall rob and reve,
Where we shall beat and bind?

Well shall we do, quoth Robin Hood,
Little care for that take thou—
But look that ye harm no husbandman,
That tilleth with his plough.

Nor shall ye any good yeoman harm
That cometh by greenwood tree;
Nor any good knight, nor any good squire,
That would a good-fellow be.

But proud archbishops and bishops,
Them ye shall beat and bind;
And for the high-sheriff of Nottingham,
Ye shall ever hold him in mind.

This law to the letter, quoth Little John,
To practise we are content.
God send us a guest, that our dinner be drest;
For the day it is far spent.

Said Robin, go take thy good bow in hand,
Let Mutch too wend with thee,
And Scathelock, he shall go likewise,
And let no man abide with me.

And walk ye up to the Salleys,
And so unto Watling street,
Where ye shall await some stranger guest,
For such shall ye chance to meet.

Let him be earl, or let him be baron,
Or be he abbot or knight,
Ye must bring him hither to lodge with me,
And a dinner shall him requite.

They went their way to the Salleys,
These yeomen good all three,
They looked east, and they looked west,
Yet might they no man see:

But as they looked in Bernysdale
By a path that secret lay,
Then came there a knight riding,
And they met him in the way.

All dreary was his semblance,
And little was his pride,
His one foot in his stirrup stood,
The other waved beside.

His hood was hanging o'er his eyes,
Simple was his array,
A sorrier, sadder man than he
Rode never in summer's day.

Then Little John, in courteous guise,
Down bent him on his knee,
And said, You are welcome, gentle knight,
Right welcome are you to me.

Welcome be thou to the greenwood,
Courteous knight and free,
For you hath my master, fasting,
Waited these hours three.

Said the knight, who is your master?
Little John said, Robin Hood.
He is a good yeoman, said the knight,
Of him have I heard much good.

I yield, good friends, since needs must be,
With you to take my way,
Albeit at Blythe or Doncaster,
I had purposed to dine today.

Then full of care went forth the knight,
And little did he speak,
The tears they ran from out his eyes
And fell down by his cheek.

Now Robin Hood at the lodge door stood,
And when he the knight did see,
Full courteously he doff'd his hood
And bent to him his knee.

A welcome, Sir Knight, said Robin,
Welcome thou art to me,
Long have I waited, a fasting,
For you, these hours full three.

Then answer made the gentle knight,
His words were fair and free;
Now God thee save, thou Robin Hood
And thy good company.

They wash'd together before they ate,
And sat them down to dine,
And their meat it was of the good red deer,
And plenty of bread and wine.

Pheasant and swan, and river fowl
Was soon before them spread;
Nor wanted there ever so little a bird
That was on briar bred.

Sir knight, said Robin, now do thy best;
Gramercy, sir, said he—
Such dinner as this I have not had,
These weeks one, two, or three.

And Robin, if it chance again
That hitherward I may be,
So good a dinner for thee I'll make,
As thou hast made for me.

Gramercy, knight, quoth Robin Hood;
It never was yet my plan,
To seek my dinner in greediness,
And beg it of any man.

Said Robin, to pay before we part,
Methinks it is but right,
For goodly manners never could let
A yeoman pay for a knight.

Said the knight, the little my coffers have,
I may not give for shame—
Said Robin, go look thou, Little John,
And little heed thou the blame:

And tell me plainly truth, sir knight,
So God have part of thee?
Said the knight, ten shillings is all I have,
As God may have part of me.

Said Robin, if thou hast no more,
No penny of that I take,
And if thou have need of any more,
I'll lend it for thy sake.

Go forth now, Little John, and search,
And tell thou truth to me,
And if thou findest but ten shillings
No penny of that I see.

Little John spread the mantle down
Full fair upon the ground,
And there he found in the knight's coffer,
But even half a pound.

There letting it lie, to his master low
He bowed as full near he drew,
What tidings John, said Robin Hood?
Sir, the knight to a penny is true.

Fill, fill of the wine, said Robin Hood,
With the best, sir knight, begin,
And troth, sir knight, I marvel to see
Thy clothing, it is so thin.

Answer me now in friendly sort,
This word I ask of thee,
Or wert thou made a knight perforce,
Or else of yeomanry?

Or hast husbanded thy store but ill,
And lived in stroke and strife;
In usury hast thou lived or lust,
And with wrong hast led thy life?

O no such charges, said the knight,
As these against me lie;
A hundred winters my ancestors
Have been knights here as well as I.

But poverty often comes, Robin,
To man, or soon or late;
But God that sitteth in heav'n above,
Alone may mend his state.

Within these years but two or three
My neighbours well have known,
That I might spend four hundred pound
Good money of my own.

Now little have I, said the knight,
But children and my wife;
'Tis God hath shapen such an end,
God may amend my life.

Said Robin, by what evil hap
Hath all thy wealth been lost?
My kindness, to my folly great,
Quoth he, hath been the cost.

In sooth, I had a son, Robin,
That should have been my heir,
That scarcely twenty winters old
In field would joust full fair;

He slew a knight of Lancashire,
  He slew a squire so bold,
And all to save him in his right
  My goods have been set and sold.

The abbey of St. Mary holds
  In pledge of debt my lands,
That are until a certain day
  In the rich abbot's hands.

Said Robin Hood, the truth now tell,
  What is the debt's amount?
Said he, to me four hundred pound
  The abbot he did count.

Said Robin, what will thee befal,
  If that thy bond should fail,
And lost thy land? Said he, soon o'er
  The salt sea will I sail;

And see where Christ was quick and dead,
  On the Mount of Calvary.
Farewell, my friend, and have good days;
  It will no better be.

The tears they fell fast from his eyes,
  He would have gone his way;
Farewèll, good friends, sith it be so,
  I have no more to pay.

Where be thy friends? said Robin Hood.
  Sir, never will one me own,
While I was rich enough at home,
  Then boast full great was blown.

But now away full far from me
Even as beasts they run,
As if they never saw my face,
They heed it not or shun.

Then Little John in pity wept,
Scathelock and Mutch in fear,
Said Robin, still of the best wine fill,
For here is a simple cheer.

Hast thou no friends, said Robin Hood,
That will thy sureties be?
Not any, said the knight, have I,
But God that died on tree.

Away with thy tricks, said Robin Hood,
No money lend I thereon;
Dost think such surety I will take,
Or of Peter, or Paul, or John?

By him that made me, and in heaven
The sun and moon did set,
Some better surety find, or thou
No money of mine wilt get.

I have none other, said the knight,
Sith I the troth must say,
Unless Our Ladye dear, who ne'er
Yet fail'd me till this day.

By God's dear worth, said Robin Hood,
Search England far and near,
I never found better surety
Than that of Our Ladye dear.

So come thou forth now, Little John,
And go to my treasury,
And bring to me four hundred pound,
And see that well told it be.

Readily Little John went forth,
And Scathelock went before;
And he told out four hundred pounds;
Told them by eighteen score.

And call you that well told? said Mutch;
Said John, What grieveth thee?
It is alms to help a gentle knight,
That is fallen in poverty.

Master, then said Little John,
His clothing is full thin,
A livery must thou give the knight,
His body to lappe therein.

For ye have scarlet and green, master,
And many a rich array,
No merchant in merry England is
So rich, I dare to say.

Of every colour take three yards,
And let it good measure be.
Little John none other measure took,
But that of his own bow-tree.

And every handful he measured out,
Over three feet he lept.
The Devilkin's draper art thou, said Mutch,
Such measures hast thou kept.

But Scathelock he stood still and laugh'd,
And saith, by wrong or right,
The best measure Little John may give,
For the cloth cost him but light.

Now master mine, thus Little John
All unto Robin spake,
You must surely give this knight a horse,
These goods all home to take.

Then take the gray courser, said Robin Hood,
And give him a saddle new,
He is our Lady's messenger,
God grant that he be true.

And a palfrey good, said little Mutch
To maintain him in his right;
And a pair of boots, said good Scathelock,
For he is a gentle knight.

Said Robin, what givest thou, Little John?
Sir, a pair of spurs clean gilt,
To pray for all this company:
God him from sorrow uplift.

My day of payment, said the knight,
O name when it shall be;
Said Robin, be it this day twelvemonth,
Under this greenwood tree.

And shame it were, said Robin Hood,
A knight alone should ride,
Without squire, or yeoman, or any page,
To travel by his side.

I shall lend thee Little John my man,
Thy steps shall he attend,
He'll stand thee well in a yeoman's stead,
And if need there be, defend.

FYTTE THE SECOND.

Now as the knight went on his way,
  This game he thought full good:
When he looked in Bernysdale,
  He blessed Robin Hood.

And when he thought on Bernysdale,
  On Scathelock, Mutch, and John,
He bless'd them for the best company
  That ever he lighted upon.

And thus spake out that gentle knight;
  To Little John said he,
To-morrow must I at York town,
  At Saint Mary's abbey be.

And to the abbot of that place,
Four hundred pound I pay,
And if I be not there this night,
My land is lost for aye.—

The proud abbot said to his convent,
Where he stood upon the ground:
This day twelvemonth there came a knight
And borrow'd four hundred pound.

Money he borrow'd four hundred pound
On all his lands in fee,
And if he come not this very day,
Disherited shall he be.

It is full early, said the prior,
The day is not far gone,
I had rather pay a hundred pound,
And lay it down anon.

Perchance the knight is beyond the sea,
But in England is his right,
While cold and hunger suffereth he,
And many a sorry night.

Great pity it were, the prior said,
His lands so to possess,
If ye are so light of your conscience,
Ye do him great wrongfulness.

By God and Saint Richard, the abbot said,
In my beard dost thou ever flee!
With that there came a fat-headed monk,
The high-cellarer was he.

Said the monk, he is or dead or hang'd,
And by our Lord I swear,
That we shall have in this place to spend
Four hundred pound by the year.

The abbot and this high-cellarer,
They both stood out full bold,
And the great high justice of England
The abbot there did hold.

The lord high justice, and many more,
Had taken into their hands,
To do that knight a grievous wrong;
For the debt to take his lands.

The abbot and all his company,
Sore deem'd the knight bested,
An if he come not this very day,
He forfeits his land, they said.

The high justice cried, he will not come,
Or will come methinks too late;
But in time to bring sorrow to them all,
The knight he was at their gate.

And thus spake out that gentle knight,
Unto all his companie,
Now put ye on the simple weeds
Ye brought from beyond the sea.

Thus put they on their simple weeds,
And came to the gates anon:
And the porter he was already there,
And welcom'd them every one.

Welcome, sir knight, the porter said,
My lord thy coming waits;
And all for thee, more gentlemen
Have come unto our gates.

The porter then a wondrous oath
By Him that made him, swore,
So good a horse for a courser
Never saw I before.

Into the stable go lead them all
That eased they might be.
Stable of thine no steed of mine,
Said the knight, shall hold for me.

The lords were all in order met
In that proud abbot's hall;
The knight stepp'd forth, and kneeling down
Greeted them great and small.

By favour, sir abbot, said the knight,
I come to hold my day;
But the very first word the abbot spake
Was this, hast thou brought my pay?

I have not one penny, said the knight,
Not one have I brought to thee.
Said the abbot, a luckless debtor thou;—
Sir justice drink thou to me.

What doest thou here? the abbot said,
Sith thou hast not my pay?
For God's dear sake, then said the knight,
To beg for a longer day.

Said the justice, now am I holden
To the abbot by cloth and fee;
Now good sir sheriff be my friend,
For the love of God! said he.

Thou hast fail'd of thy day, said the justice,
Thy land in forfeit goes;
Now good sir justice be my friend,
Defend me from my foes.

Now good sir abbot be my friend,
As thee it may well beseem,
And hold my lands in thy own hands,
Till I shall them redeem;

And I will in thy service bide,
Truely as now I sue,
Till ye shall have four hundred pound,
Of money good and true.

The abbot swore a full great oath,
By him that died on tree:
Go get thee land where get thou may,
For thou gettest none of me!

By God's sure worth, then said the knight,
By whom this world was wrought,
An if I have my land again,
It shall full dear be bought.

May God, that was of maiden born,
Grant us all well to speed,
For it is good to try a friend,
Ere that a man have need.

The abbot sternly on him look'd,
And shameful names did call:
Out, out! he said, thou base, false knight,
Go get thee from my hall!

Thou liest, said the gentle knight,
Proud abbot in thy hall,
For a false knight I never was,
By Him that made us all.

Up then stood the gentle knight,
And to the abbot cried,
To suffer knight to kneel so long,
Is an uncourteous pride.

In many joustes and tournaments
Full often have I been,
As oft in peril have I stood,
As any was ever seen.

Give more, give more, said the justice,
And the knight shall make release;
Or else I safely dare to swear,
Ye hold not his land in peace.

One hundred pound, the abbot said:
Said the justice, give him two;
Said the knight, ye never get so my land,
Whatever else ye do.

Though ye would give a thousand more,
Yet were ye never the nigher,
I never mean to make mine heir,
Abbot, justice, or friar.

With that he strode to a board anon,
Unto a table round,
And there he shook out of a bag,
Even four hundred pound.

Here take, sir abbot, thy gold, said he,
Thou lentest unto me;
At my coming hadst thou been courteous,
Reward should have been for thee.

Still sat the abbot, and ate no more,
For all his royal fare;
He cast his head o'er his shoulder,
And fast began to stare.

Take thy gold again, said the abbot;
Sir justice, pay back my fee;—
Not one penny, said the justice,
Gettest thou back of me.

Know you, sir abbot, and know all,
That I have kept my day;
And I will have my land again,
For aught that you can say.

The knight strode bravely from the door,
Away was gone his care,
And his good clothing on he put,
And left the other there.

Merrily singing went he forth,
As men have told in tale,
And his lady met him at his gate,
At home in Uterysdale.

Welcome, my lord, his lady cried,
Thou bringest, I fear, no good;—
Said the knight, be merry, be merry, dame,
And pray for Robin Hood.

Pray that his soul be ever in bliss,
For he helped me out of ill;
Had it not been for his kindness,
We had been beggars still.

I am not in that abbot's debt,
For he has now his pay:
It was that good yeoman lent it me,
As I went by the way.

The knight he long dwelt well at home,
The pleasant sooth to say,
Till he had got four hundred pound,
All ready for him to pay.

He bought him then an hundred bows,
With strings both strong and fair;
An hundred sheaf of arrows good,
Whose heads well burnish'd were.

Every arrow an ell in length,
With peacock's feather dight,
And all of them, right fair to see,
Were notched with silver white.

He got him then an hundred men
Well harness'd for good stead;
And he himself in a like fashion
Was clothed in white and red.

A groom did lead his sumpter steed,
His lance he held full long;
And so went he to Bernysdale
Singing a merry song.

He reached a bridge where wrestling was,
Detained there was he;
For there were all the best of men,
Out of the west countrie.

A full fair game was then afoot,
There stood a bull all white,
With saddle and bridle a courser,
With burnish'd gold full bright.

A pair of gloves, a red gold ring,
And a pipe of wine likewise;
And he that beareth him best of all,
Shall bear away the prize.

There was a yeoman in that place,
Did well his worth maintain;
That friendless and a stranger
Was like to have been slain.

The knight he pitied that yeoman
In that place wherein he stood;
And said, that he should have no harm,
For the love of Robin Hood.

The knight with all his hundred men,
With arrows and bows well bent,
Press'd home forthwith into the place,
The mischief to prevent.

They shoulder'd all and made him room,
To hear what he would say.
He took the yeoman by the hand,
And gave him all the play.

Five marks he gave him for his wine,
Where it lay upon the ground,
And bad them broach it, that all should drink,
And merriment should go round.

Long tarried thus this gentle knight,
Nor left he the sport too soon,
And Robin so long was fasting
Full three hours past the noon.

FYTTE THE THIRD.

Now listen all ye gentlemen,
All ye that now be here,
Of Little John, the knight's man,
A merry tale you shall hear.

The young men would a shooting go,
It was on a merry day:
Little John set his bow anon;
For he would to them away.

Three times Little John did shoot,
And each time cleft the wand,
And there the proud sheriff of Nottingham,
He by the marks did stand.

The sheriff swore a full great oath,
By him that died on tree,
The very best archer is this same man,
That ever my eyes did see.

Come tell me thy name, thou stout young man,
Thy name in little space,
Tell me thy country, whence thou art,
And where is thy dwelling-place?

If I may believe my mother, said he,
And I've learnt nor more nor less,
At home I am called Reynold Greenleaf,
And was born at Holderness.

Now tell me, thou Reynold Greenleaf,
If thou wilt dwell with me?
And every year will I give thee
Twenty marks to thy fee.

I have a master, said Little John,
A courteous knight is he,
If ye would first have leave of him,
The better it would be.

The sheriff he gat Little John
Of the knight, a year throughout,
Therefore he gave him upon the spot
A horse that was strong and stout.

Now Little John is the sheriff's man—
And Little John ever thought,
We fare not ill—yet in serving him,
I'll show that I'm dearly bought.

Now God so help me, said Little John,
I swear by my loyalty,
I shall be the worst serving-man to him,
That ever yet had he.

The Sheriff, it fell on a wednesday,
On a hunting he was sped:
And Little John was forgotten at home,
And he lay there in his bed.

And therefore was he a fasting,
Till it was past the noon;
Then Little John to the steward said,
Prythee give me to dine, and soon.

It is far long for Greenleaf
A-fasting here to be,
So I prythee thou, master steward,
My dinner give thou to me.

Thou shalt have nor meat nor drink, said he,
Till my Lord be come to town;
Said Little John, rather than fast so long,
Master steward, I'll crack thy crown.

Unmannerly was the butler then,
As he stood there on the floor:
And started off to the buttery,
And there he shut fast the door.

Little John gave him a parting rap,
His back was nigh bent in twain;
If he should live a hundred years,
He would scarcely go straight again.

With a kick of his foot he spurn'd the door,
And up it went well and fine:
There made he a large delivery,
Both of the ale and wine.

Tho' ye will not dine, said Little John,
Here's wine and ale to drink,
And ye'll have cause these hundred years,
Of Little John to think.

Little John ate, and Little John drank,
At pleasure a good full bout;
Now the sheriff had in his kitchen, a cook
That was a bold man and stout.

I do avow, then said this cook,
Thou art the shrewdest hynde,
In such a household as this to dwell,
And such dinner to ask, and find!

Thus spake the cook unto Little John,
And three good strokes he lent:
I make mine avow, said Little John,
With these am I much content.

Thou art a bold and hardy cook,
It well bethinketh me,
And before thou pass out from this place,
Better tried thou shalt be.

Little John then he drew a good sword,
The cook took another in hand,
And neither thought one inch to yield,
But stiffly how to stand.

Two miles and more, they fought full sore,
The while so stout and strong,
Yet neither could the other harm,
Tho' the bout was a good hour long.

By my true faith and loyalty,
To the cook said Little John,
Thou art one of the very best swordsmen,
I ever did look upon.

Couldst thou but shoot as well with bow,
To the green wood shouldst thou with me:
And twice in the year thy clothing
It should changed be.

With every year from Robin Rood,
Twenty marks to thy fee.
Put up thy sword, then said the cook,
And fellows we two will be.

Then the cook he fetch'd for Little John
Good venison of the doe:
The best of bread, and the best of wine,
To regale them before they go.

When they had ate, and drank their fill,
Together their faith they plight,
That they would be with Robin Hood,
That selfsame day at night.

And then full fast to the treasure house,
Their way they both did make,
And tho' the locks were of good strong steel,
Every one they brake.

The silver vessel they took away,
With all that they could get:
Nor of vessels, or cups, or spoons, did they
A single one forget.

And all the coin, they took beside
Three hundred pound and three:
And straight they went to Robin Hood,
Under the green-wood tree.

Now God thee save, my master dear,
And Christ thee save and see.
And thou, said Robin, to Little John,
Welcome art thou to me.

And welcome be that yeoman fair,
Thou bringest along with thee;
What tidings hast thou from Nottingham,
Little John, tell to me?

Well thee greeteth the proud sheriff,
And sendeth thee here by me
His cook, and his vessel of silver,
And three hundred pound and three.

I make mine avow, said Robin Hood,
By the Holy Trinity,
It never was by his good will
This good is come to me.

Little John then he did bethink,
Right shrewdly of a wile;
And so it happ'd of his own good will,
In the forest he ran five mile.

And there he met the sheriff so proud,
Hunting with horn and hound:
Little John, he kneel'd in courtesy,
Before him on the ground.

Now God thee save, and Christ thee save;
Said he, my master dear.
What! Reynold Greenleaf, said the sheriff,
Whence, wherefore art thou here?

O, sir, I've seen the fairest sight,
In forest where I have been:
O, sir, it is one of the fairest sights,
That ever by eyes was seen.

Yonder I saw a right fair hart,
His colour green throughout;
Seven score of deer upon an herd,
Are with him all about.

His horns they are strong and sharp, master,
I dared not shoot for dread;
The points of his antlers sixty or more,
Lest they should strike me dead.

I vow to God, said the sheriff,
That sight I fain would see;
Then haste thee thitherward, master dear,
Anon, and wend with me.

The sheriff rode, and Little John's feet
With running beside did smart;
Said he, when they came before Robin Hood,
Lo! here is the master hart.

The proud sheriff, he stood there still,
And a sorry man was he:
Woe betide thee, thou Reynold Greenleaf,
For thou hast betrayed me.

I make my avow, said Little John,
Master the blame is thine;
Mis-served was I of my dinner,
At your home when I would dine.

The sheriff was soon to his supper set,
And served with silver white;
But when his own good vessel he saw,
He had then small appetite.

O make thee cheer, without let or fear,
Said Robin and merry-make;
For thy life, master sheriff, is granted thee,
Even for Little John's sake.

And when they all had supped well,
And day was gone, so soon,
Robin commanded Little John,
To take off his hosen and shoon.

His kyrtle and his upper coat,
All furr'd it was, I ween;
And to wrap his body as he was wont,
All in his mantle green.

Robin commanded his stout young men,
Under the green-wood tree,
That they should lie in such a sort,
That the sheriff them might see.

That sheriff proud he lay all night,
All in his breechen and shirt;
No wonder it was in the green wood,
If his sides they had some hurt.

Now make good cheer, said Robin,
For charity live in glee,
For this is the law of our order,
Under the green-wood tree.

Said the sheriff, thy order is harder,
Than of anchorite, or of friar:
Nor would I for all merry England's gold,
Live long here beneath thy briar.

These next twelve months, said Robin Hood,
Here thou shalt dwell with me;
And here will I teach thee, proud sheriff,
An outlaw like me to be.

O, rather than here one other night,
Said the sheriff, I lie or live,
Smite off my head this very morn,
And I the deed forgive.

Or let me go, said the sheriff,
For good Saint Charity,
And I will be the very best friend,
That ever was unto thee.

Swear me an oath, said Robin Hood,
An oath on this my brand,
Thou wilt not way-lay, nor do me harm,
By water, nor yet by land.

And if that any of these my men,
Thou findest by night or day,
Upon thine oath thou must swear to me,
To help them as help you may.

Now the sheriff swore his good strong oath,
And went homewards sore to see:
And never had heap of mossy green stones,
More smack of green-wood than he.

FYTTE THE FOURTH.

THE sheriff dwelt in Nottingham,
  Right glad that he was there;
And Robin Hood and his merry men,
  To the green-wood did repair.

Go we to dinner, said Little John,
  But Robin Hood said nay,
For I dread our Ladye be wroth with me,
  For she sends me not my pay.

Doubt not, master, said Little John,
  The sun it is not set;
I'll vouch for the knight, he's trusty and true,
  Nor doubt he will pay his debt.

Said Robin, go take thy bow in hand,
And Mutch shall wend with thee,
And so shall William Scathelock,
And let no man abide with me.

And walk up to the Salleys,
And up to Watling Street,
And wait till ye find some strange guest,
As ye shall chance to meet.

Whether he be some messenger,
Or minstrel that shall appear,
Or be he ever so poor a man,
He shall taste of my good cheer.

Little John started forth half vex'd,
And somewhat in hunger keen,
And girded himself with his good sword,
Under his mantle green.

And they went up to the Salleys,
These yeomen all the three,
They looked east, they looked west,
Yet no man might they see:

But as they looked in Bernysdale,
There in the byeway side,
Two black monks they beheld, who did
Each a good palfrey ride.

Little John was first to speak,
To Mutch he 'gan to say,
I'll venture to lay my life in pledge,
That these monks have brought our pay.

Now make good cheer, said Little John,
Look to your bows of yew,
And look your hearts be steady and sure,
Your bow-strings trusty and true.

The monk he hath men fifty-two,
Seven sumpter horse beside,
There is not a bishop in this land,
So royally can ride.

Brethren, then said little John,
We are no more but three,
But we must bring them to dinner,
Or we dare not our master see.

Now bend your bows, said Little John,
Make all of them to stand,
The foremost monk, his life or death,
Is closed in my hand.

Abide, abide, thou churlish monk,
Abide where thou dost stand,
For if thou movest one step, I swear
Thy death is in my hand.

Hurt reach thee under thy hat's band,
Right full into thy pate,
For thou hast made our master wroth,
A fasting so long to wait.

Who is your master? then said the monk.
Little John said, Robin Hood.
A stout strong thief is he, said the monk,
Of him have I never heard good.

Thou liest, then said Little John,
And shalt rue this word of thine:
For he is a forest yeoman,
And hath waited for thee to dine.

Mutch, then was ready with a bolt
Anon, which so he sent,
That he hit the monk right on the breast;
And unto the ground he went.

Of all the fifty-two young men,
There staid not even one;
Save a little page, and a groom to lead
The sumpter-steed with John.

They brought the monk to the lodge's door,
Whether he did like or loth,
Despite, he must speak with Robin Hood,
When face to face were both.

Robin let down his hood—the monk,
Who that respect did see,
Uncourteously kept still his own;
As it was, he let it be.

Said Little John, he is a churl
Master. Quoth Robin Hood,
Doubtless, he lacketh courtesy,
His manners are aught but good.

Said Robin Hood, how many men
Had the monk here with him, John?
Fifty and two when first we met,
But the most of them are gone.

Blow loud the horn, said Robin Hood,
And let our fellows know.
Then seven score of strong yeomen
Came pricking on a row.

And every one of these stout yeomen
Had a mantle of scarlet gay,
And up they came to Robin Hood,
To hear what he would say.

They made the monk to wash as wont,
And to dine upon the best:
And Robin Hood, and Little John,
With reverence served their guest.

Be merry, said Robin.—Gramercy, sir.—
Said Robin, now us acquaint,
Where is your abbey when ye are at home,
And who is your Patron Saint?

At Saint Mary's Abbey, said the monk,
Tho' simple am I, we lie.
And what is thy office? said Robin Hood.
High Cellarer, sir, am I.

Ye are the more welcome, said Robin,
So ever my fortune be;
And fill him up of the best wine,
This monk he shall drink to me.

In truth have I marvell'd much and long,
Even all this livelong day,
And fear'd our Ladye be wroth with me,
For she sent me not my pay.

Nay, doubt not, master, said Little John,
Ye have small need, I wis;
This monk hath brought it, I dare avouch,
For he of her abbey is.

She was the surety, said Robin,
Between a knight and me,
Of a little money I lent him,
Under the green-wood tree.

And if thou hast that silver brought,
I prythee, good monk, with speed,
Here count it out, and thee will I help,
If thou of me hast need.

The monk he swore a full great oath,
That might choke him every word:
Of the surety of which thou tellest me,
Of a truth have I never heard.

I do avow, said Robin Hood,
Monk, thou art in blame to me,
For in dealings God is righteous,
And his Holy Mother as He.

With thine own tongue thou toldest,
Thou canst not say it nay,
How thou art but her servant,
And servest her every day.

And thou art made her messenger,
And dost my money bring;
That thou hast kept thy time so well,
It is a pleasant thing.

What hold your coffers? said Robin,
The truth now to me tell.
I have, said he, but twenty marks,
As mercy with me may dwell.

If that be thy all, said Robin,
Not a penny will I touch,
And if thou hast need of any more,
I will lend thee twice as much.

If more I find, that more I take,
Count it already lost;
But for thy spending in thy need,
I grudge thee not that cost.

Now Little John, go forth and search,
And tell thou truth to me,
And if there be only twenty mark,
Not a penny will I see.

Little John spread his mantle down,
As he had done before,
And he told out of the monk's coffer,
Eight hundred pound and more.

Little John went to his master, in haste,
The money lay where it was set;
Sir, said he, the monk is true enough,
Our Ladye pays double the debt.

I do avow, said Robin Hood,
What I told thee, monk, is true;
Our Ladye is the truest woman,
For a surety I ever knew.

And by all godly worth I swear,
Search England through, and see,
No better surety may be found,
Nor half so good as she.

Now fill of the best, the monk shall drink;
Greet well thy Ladye kind,
And tell her, if she need Robin Hood,
In him a true friend she'll find.

And if more silver she needeth,
By the token that now I touch,
And she hath sent, come again to me,
And she shall have thrice as much.

That monk was wending London-ward,
Great council there to meet;
To plot, how the knight, that now rode high horse,
They might trample under their feet.

Now whither art bent? said Robin Hood.
Sir, we travel our manors unto,
To reckon there with our bailiffs,
Much wrong to us that do.

Come hither, said Robin, to Little John,
Believe it, I never took
To my service a yeoman so good as thou,
In the bags of a monk to look.

There's that other coffer, said Robin,
See you how much 'twill bring;
Nay, by our Ladye, said the monk,
That were an uncourteous thing.

To bid a guest to your dinner,
And then to beat and bind!
Said Robin, our custom it is of old
To leave but little behind.

The monk he gave his horse the spur,
Nor longer would he abide.
Said Robin, 'twere fitting, you ask to drink
A stirrup-cup, ere you ride.

Nay, nay, said the monk, that I came here,
Is but little to my mind;
For had I been at Blythe, or Doncaster,
Much cheaper I should have dined!

Your abbot greet well, said Robin,
Your prior as well I pray;
And bid him send me such a monk,
To dine with me every day.

Leave we the monk upon his way,
To speak of that gentle knight;
For yet he came to keep his day,
While yet the day was light.

Full straight he went to Bernysdale,
Robin Hood found he then,
He found him under the green-wood tree,
With all his merry men.

There did the knight from his palfrey 'light,
And Robin it straight did see;
And courteously he let down his hood,
And bow'd him upon his knee.

God save thee now, good Robin Hood,
And all this thy company:
Welcome, said Robin, thou gentle knight,
Right welcome art thou to me.

Then all unto that gentle knight,
Thus Robin Hood he spake:
What needeth thee to the green-wood,
Thy journey, sir knight, to take?

Welcome,—but why so long away?
For cunningly it was plann'd
By the abbot, and lord high justice,
That they would have my land.

Said Robin, hast thou thy land again?
Now tell the truth to me.
Yea, the land is mine again, said the knight;
For that I thank God and thee.

It chanced I came to a wrestling place,
Grieve not, I have been long,
For a poor yeoman I chanced to help,
On whom they put much wrong.

For that good deed, said Robin Hood,
Sir knight, I give thanks to thee:
For he that lends a poor yeoman help,
His friend will I ever be.

Said the knight, I bring four hundred pound,
You lent me, and I do owe:
And here are also twenty marks,
For the kindness you did show.

Nay, before God, said Robin Hood,
Enjoy thine own for aye,
Our Ladye, by her high-cellarer,
She hath sent me all my pay.

It were great shame to take it twice,
Such shame as may not be:
And by my troth, thou gentle knight,
Welcome thou art to me.

When Robin thus had told his tale,
He laugh'd with merry cheer;
Nay by my troth, then said the knight,
Your money is ready here.

O make to thyself good use thereof,
Thou gentle knight so free,
Said Robin; and be thou welcome
Under my trystel tree.

Now what are these bows, said Robin,
These arrows so feather'd and fine?
They are but a poor present, said the knight,
And I mean they should be thine.

Come forth Little John, said Robin Hood,
Go thou straight to my treasury,
And bring me thence the four hundred pound
The monk over-told to me.

Said Robin, here take four hundred pound,
Thou gentle knight and true:
And buy thee a horse and harness good,
And gild thy spurs anew.

If thou lackest thy spending, come again,
While Robin Hood doth live,
By my troth, thy spending shall not fail,
While I have aught to give.

Thine own four hundred pound enjoy,
The which I lent to thee:
And make thyself no more so bare;
This counsel take of me.

Thus did good Robin the knight release
Even from all his care:
May God that sitteth in Heaven high,
Grant us as well to fare.

FYTTE THE FIFTH.

And now the knight his leave hath ta'en,
And gone upon his way;
And Robin Hood still in the green-wood,
With his men tarried every day.

Now listen all ye gentlemen,
And you shall quickly know,
How the sheriff of Nottingham proclaim'd
A shooting with the bow;

That choicest archers of the North,
Should come upon a day:
And they that are approved the best,
The game shall bear away.

Who shooteth farthest fair and low,
As it is archer's law,
All at a pair of goodly butts
Under the green-wood shaw,

An arrow, with shaft of silver white,
Right good shall be his lot:
With head and feathers of rich red gold,
In England the like is not.

When Robin Hood these tidings heard,
Under his trystel tree;
He said, make ready ye strong young men,
For this shooting I will see.

Make speed, make speed, my merry men all,
For ye shall go with me,
And I will prove the sheriff's faith,
And know if true he be.

And when their bows they all had bent,
And their arrows feather'd free:
Seven score of strong young men
There stood at Robin's knee.

And when they came to Nottingham,
The butts were fair and long,
And there was many a bold archer,
That shot with bow so strong.

But six, said Robin, shall shoot with me,
The others shall keep my head,
And stand by me with good bows bent,
That treason we may not dread.

The fourth outlaw that bent his bow,
Himself it was Robin Hood:
And the proud sheriff his shooting saw,
As by the butt he stood.

Robin Hood shot thrice about,
And always hit the wand;
And so did likewise good Gilbert,
He with the strong white hand.

Little John, and stout Scathelock,
Were archers among the first:
And Little Mutch, and good Reynold,
They would not be the worst.

And when they all had shot about,
These archers fair and good,
Evermore still by far the best
Among them was Robin Hood.

Then that good arrow, for he was best,
They did on him bestow:
He took the gift right courteously;
And to the green-wood would go.

Then all cried out on Robin Hood,
And great horns gan to blow;
Woe with thee, treason, said Robin Hood,
Full evil art thou to know.

And woe to thee thou sheriff proud,
Thus ill thy guest to greet:
Far other than this thy promise was,
In forest where we did meet.

But had I thee in the green-wood,
Under my trystel tree,
A better pledge than thy false oath,
Now would I have of thee.

Full many a bow thereat was bent;
And arrows fast did glide,
Many a kyrtle there was rent,
And hurt was many a side.

No man could drive these outlaws back,
Nor yet abide their cast,
So strong their shot; but the sheriff's men
They fled away full fast.

When Robin Hood the ambush saw,
In green-wood he fain had been.
Many an arrow there was shot,
These companies between.

And little John was hurt full sore,
With an arrow in his knee,
That neither could he go, nor ride,
Piteous it was to see.

O master, then said Little John,
If ever thou lovedst me,
And for the love of that dear Lord
That died upon a tree;

And for my meed of service true,
From the day it first began,
O never let the proud sheriff
Take me a living man.

But take thee out thy good brown sword,
And smite thou off my head;
And give me deep and deadly wounds,
Until my life be fled.

O I never could do that, John,
Said Robin, nor see thee slain,
For all the gold in England,
Here heap'd before me plain.

Said Little Mutch, forbid it God,
That bare for us such smart,
That God forbid, dear Little John,
That you and we should part.

Then up he took him on his back,
And bare him well a mile;
And many a time he laid him down,
And shot another while.

Not far there was within the wood,
A castle, a strong abode:
Double ditch'd it was about,
And walled against the road.

And there that gentle knight did dwell,
Sir Richard of the Lee:
Whom Robin had befriended so,
Under the green-wood tree.

Robin Hood and all his band,
He took in his castle then:
O welcome be thou Robin Hood,
Both thou and all thy men.

I owe thee thanks for thy comfort,
And for thy great courtesy,
And of all thy noble kindness,
Under the green-wood tree.

No man I love in all this world,
So much as I do love thee;
And despite the sheriff of Nottingham,
Right safe thou here shalt be.

Shut close the gates, and draw the bridge,
Let no man enter in:
Make you ready and arm you well;
Then man the walls within.

This thing, good Robin, I promise thee,
And by Saint Quinctin swear,
Twelve days thou shalt abide with me,
And well too shalt thou fare.

Boards were laid, and clothes were spread,
Readily and anon:
And Robin Hood and his merry men
Well met, to feast are gone.

FYTTE THE SIXTH.

Listen all ye gentlemen,
And hearken to my song:
How the proud sheriff of Nottingham,
With his men-at-arms so strong,

Full fast came to the high sheriff,
The country up to rout;
The knight's strong castle they beset,
And all its walls about.

The sheriff proud, he cried aloud,
And said, thou traitor knight,
Thou keepest here the king's enemy,
Against his laws and right.

Then said the knight, I will avow,
What I have done is right:
Upon all the lands that I possess,
And as I am a true knight.

So wend ye back upon your way,
And speak no more to me,
Till ye can show the king's will,
What he shall say to thee.

Small hope this forward answer
Did to the sheriff bring:
So forth he rode to London Town,
All to acquaint the king.

And there he told him of the knight,
And eke of Robin Hood;
And also of his archers bold,
That noble were, and good.

He would avow what he had done,
The outlaws would maintain,
Set you at naught, and rule the North,
With all his might and main.

Said the king, I will to Nottingham
Within this fortnight go:
And there will I take Robin Hood,
And that false knight also.

And go thou hence, proud sheriff,
And as I bid, provide
Archers enough and of the best,
In the country far and wide.

The sheriff now had taken leave,
And gone upon his way:
And Robin Hood was in the green-wood,
Upon a certain day.

And Little John was sound and whole,
Of the shot-wound in his knee,
And betook him straight to Robin Hood,
Under the green-wood tree.

Robin Hood walks the forest free,
Under the fresh green leaf:
And the proud sheriff of Nottingham
He knew it to his grief.

So the sheriff fail'd of Robin Hood,
Who might not be his prey;
Then lay he in wait for the gentle knight,
Both by the night and day.

Ever he watch'd that gentle knight,
Sir Richard of the Lee:
As he went a-hawking, the river side,
How his hawks would fly to see,

There he took this gentle knight,
All with a strong-armed band,
And he took him home to Nottingham,
Bound both by foot and hand.

The sheriff swore a full great oath,
By him that died on tree,
He had rather than a hundred pound,
It had been Robin than he.

Then the Lady of the gentle knight,
The fairest is she and good:
She hath set her upon her palfrey,
And is ridden to the green-wood.

And when she came to the green forest,
Robin and all his men
Found she under the green bough,
For they were at home again.

Now God thee save, good Robin Hood,
And thy men so noble here:
O Robin! a boon thou must grant to me,
For the love of our Ladye dear.

Thou never wilt let my wedded lord
Shamefully slain to be:
He is fast bound to Nottingham,
And it's all through his love of thee.

Anon, forthwith said Robin Hood,
To the lady, now tell it me,
What man is he hath ta'en your lord?
It is the proud sheriff, said she.

It is the proud sheriff hath ta'en him,
Alas! the truth I say:
Nor is he now more than three miles
Pass'd yet upon the way.

Up then started Robin Hood,
As one was mad and raved,
Up and be quick my merry young men,
For the knight he shall be saved.

And who this trouble forsaketh,
By him that died on tree,
And by him that all things maketh,
No longer shall dwell with me.

Right soon were many good bows bent,
More than full seven score,
Hedge nor ditch, they spared none,
That ever was them before.

I make mine avow, said Robin Hood,
The knight I fain would see,
And if I ever retake him,
Reveng'd he soon shall be.

And when they came to Nottingham,
They walk'd bold up the street:
And the proud sheriff of Nottingham,
Right soon they chanc'd to meet.

Bide where thou art, proud sheriff, he said,
Abide, and speak with me;
There be some tidings of our king,
I would fain have of thee.

I have not been so fast a-foot,
I tell thee these seven year:
And I make a vow, thou proud sheriff,
This travel shall cost thee dear.

Then Robin Hood low he bent his bow,
An arrow he drew at will,
And so he did the proud sheriff hit,
That he lay on the ground full still.

And ere he could again arise,
Up on his feet to stand,
He smote off the sheriff's head with a blow,
With a flourish of his bright brand.

Ah! lie thou there, thou sheriff proud,
In evil thou didst thrive,
And never could man put trust in thee,
Long as thou wert alive.

His men drew out their sharp bright swords,
And about them laid so well,
That soon they drove the sheriff's men,
And by dozens to ground they fell.

Robin leaped up to the knight, and cut
His bonds in twain; in his hand
He put a good bow, and arrows keen,
And bad him by him to stand.

Knight, leave thy good horse behind thee,
And learn thee to run with speed;
And thou shalt with me to the green-wood,
Through mire, moss, fen, and weed.

Thou shalt abide in the green-wood,
Where treason no ill can bring,
Until the day that I get grace
Of Edward our comely king.

FYTTE THE SEVENTH.

THE king he went to Nottingham,
With knights in great array,
With purpose to take that gentle knight,
And Robin Hood, if he may.

He ask'd of all the country round,
What news of Robin Hood?
And also of that gentle knight,
That had his might withstood.

And when the king acquainted was
With all; into his hand,
He seized whatever the knight possess'd,
Even to all his land.

Through every pass of Lancashire,
He went both far and near:
Even as far as Plumpton Park,
And miss'd full many deer.

There where our king was wont to see
Full many herds to lie,
He could but see one only deer,
Whose horns were broad and high.

Then swore he by the Trinity,
In wrath and great surprise:
O would that I had Robin Hood,
And could see him with these eyes.

Who shall smite off that false knight's head,
And bring it unto me,
He shall have the land of the same knight,
Sir Richard of the Lee.

I give it him with my charter,
And seal it with my hand,
In merry England ever more,
To have and hold that land.

Then out and spoke a fair old knight,
For worth and trust preferr'd:
O my liege lord, O let me speak,
Tho' it be but a word.

There's not a man the country round,
May have the knight's fair land,
While Robin Hood can ride or run,
And bear a bow in hand.

Right lucky if he keep his head,
His peril plain to tell;
O give it no man my lord the king,
If ye do wish him well.

Our comely king at Nottingham
Dwelt more than half a year:
Yet of Robin Hood, or where he dwelt,
No tidings could he hear.

Yet Robin Hood went where he would,
Alway by haugh and hill,
And always kill'd the king's fat deer,
By leave of his own will.

Then spake there out a forester,
He stood by the royal knee:
Now if ye would see Robin Hood,
Take this device from me.

Take five the best knights of your train,
And of your purpose glad,
Walk ye to yonder abbey down,
And there like monks be clad.

And I myself will lead the way,
And Robin ye shall see:
Or ere ye come to Nottingham,
My head the forfeit be.

Before ye come to Nottingham,
I'll bring you to that place,
Where Robin Hood, if he be alive,
Ye shall see face to face.

Full hastily the king was clad,
And forth he went with speed:
And every one of his five knights
Came forth in monkish weed.

Our king was clad above the rest,
A broad hat on his crown,
As if he had been a lord abbot,
They rode up through the town.

Stiff were the boots our king had on,
And singing he rode away:
His song, as he rode to the green-wood,
"The covent was clothed in gray."

His baggage and his sumpter horse
Follow'd the king betimes:
Till to the green-wood they came, a mile
Under the leafy limes.

And there they met with good Robin,
Standing beside the way;
And so did many a bold archer,
It is the truth I say.

Robin Hood he took the horse,
On which the king did ride,
And said, sir abbot, by your leave,
Ye must here awhile abide.

We all be forest yeomen,
Under the green-wood tree:
We live by killing the king's deer,
Nor other means have we.

Ye have churches, and ye have rents,
And wealth in plenty hold,
And we pray you, for Saint Charity,
Ye give us of your gold.

And thus spake out our comely king,
Readily thus spake he,
I have brought no more to the green-wood
But forty pound with me.

For I have lain at Nottingham,
This fortnight with our king;
The more on lordings I have spent,
The less with me I bring.

No penny more than forty pound,
Have I brought here with me,
But had I so much as an hundred,
I would give it all to thee.

Robin he took the forty pound,
And made of it two parts,
Half he gave to his merry men,
And bad them make glad their hearts.

Said courteous Robin, this half to you,
To spend, sir, I do bring;
And we shall meet another day.
Gramercy, said the king;

Edward our king thee greeteth well,
And hath sent to thee his seal;
And biddeth thee come to Nottingham,
To tarry at meat and meal.

The royal summons then he took,
And bad him plainly see;
Robin his courteous manners knew,
And bent to him his knee.

I love no man in all the world,
So well as I do my king:
Welcome, my liege lord's seal, and thou
Good monk that dost it bring.

Sir abbot, for these thy tidings,
To-day thou shalt dine with me,
All for the love I bear my king,
Under my trystel tree.

Then forth he led our comely king,
And took him by the hand;
And many a noble deer was slain,
Upon the king's own land.

Robin took a large good horn,
And loud he 'gan to blow;
Seven score of strong young men,
Came running all in a row.

Down they kneel'd upon the knee
Robin Hood before;
And thus the king said to himself,
And by Saint Austin swore,

I see a wondrous seemly sight;
Methinketh by this sign,
That *his* men more at *his* bidding are,
Than *my* men be at mine.

Drest was their dinner speedily,
And to it they are gone;
Who serv'd our king with all their might,
Both Robin, and Little John.

Anon before our royal king,
Fat venison was set down,
The good white bread, the good red wine,
And the good fine ale and brown.

Make thee good cheer, for Saint Charity,
To the abbot Robin said,
And for thy welcome tidings,
Blessings lie on thy head.

Now shalt thou see what life we lead,
Ere home thou shalt depart:
That so thou mayest inform our king,
In his presence when thou art.

Up then started all in haste,
Their bows were smartly bent:
Our king was never so sore aghast,
For he knew not their intent.

Up they set two rods apart,
Their arrows were stout and strong.
By fifty steps, then said our king,
The distance is too long.

On every side was a rose garland,
They shot under shade of lime;
Who misseth, said Robin, shall forfeit
An arrow for every time.

He shall yield it to his master,
Tho' it be ever so fine:
And if there be one man I spare,
May I never drink ale or wine.

Each a good buffet on his head,
As it was right they bore,
And all that fell in Robin's lot,
He smote them wondrous sore.

And twice did Robin shoot his bow;
Each time he cleav'd the wand,
And so likewise did the good Gilbert,
He of the good white hand.

Little John, and stout Scathelock,
For nothing would they spare:
Robin smote them, of the garland
When they fail'd, t'was archer's fare.

At the last shot that Robin shot,
As his friends had fail'd before,
So fail'd he of the garland,
Three fingers short or more.

'Twas Gilbert then stood up and spake,
And thus he 'gan to say:
Good master Robin, your arrow is lost,
Stand forth and take your pay.

If it be so, said Robin Hood,
It may no better be,
I give thee my arrow, sir abbot,
And prythee, sir, serve thou me.

Said the king, it ill suiteth my order,
And I say it by thy leave,
Ever to smite a good yeoman,
Lest I should make him grieve.

O smite thee boldly, said Robin,
And freely, thou hast my leave;
Our king, as Robin spake the word,
Folded he up his sleeve.

And to Robin he gave such buffet,
To the ground he never was nigher:
I swear on my oath, said Robin,
Thou art a stalwart friar.

There's pith in thy arm, said Robin,
Thy shooting a foe might rue!
Awhile the king stood, and Robin Hood,
And looked each other through.

Robin he looked our comely king
Wistfully in the face,
So did Sir Richard of the Lee,
Then kneel'd down in that place.

So all the outlaws, when they saw
How on their knees they fell,
My lord the king of England,
Now do I know you well.

Mercy, said Robin, to our king,
Under your trystel tree,
I beg of thy grace and goodness,
Both for my men and me.

Yea before God that may us save,
I ask, said Robin then,
Mercy of thee, my lord the king,
For me and all my men.

Yea, before God, then said the king,
That grace receive from me:
If that thou leave the green-wood,
And all thy men with thee;

And come all straight unto my court,
Thereat with me to dwell;
Said Robin Hood, I do avow,
It shall be so and well.

I will betake me to your court,
Your service will I see,
And will bring with me of my men
Seven score and three.

But tho' like I well your service,
May I soon again be here,
To do as I ever was wont to do,
Shoot at the fat dun deer.

FYTTE THE EIGHTH.

Hast thou any green cloth, thus said the King,
That thou wilt sell to me?
Yea, have I in truth, said Robin,
Thirty yards and three.

Good Robin, replied the noble King,
I do entreat you well,
To me and all my company,
Some of that cloth to sell.

Aye troth will I, said Robin Hood,
Or else a fool were I;
For another day ye shall clothe me,
And ere Christmas draweth nigh.

The king he hath cast off his coat,
And put on a garment green,
And every knight he did likewise;
New clothed they soon were seen.

When all were clad in Lincoln green,
They cast away their gray:
Now shall we go to Nottingham,
So did king Edward say.

Their bows were bent and forth they went,
And loos'd was many a string,
Towards the town of Nottingham,
In honour of the king.

Together Robin and the King
Rode ever on the way,
And as they went a shooting,
Pluck buffet was their play.

Many a buffet won the King,
That day of Robin Hood:
Nor yet did Robin spare the King,
But paid him quite as good.

So help me, said our King, thy game
Is hard to learn I fear;
I should not get a shot of thee,
Tho' I should shoot a year.

Now all the people of Nottingham,
Amazed stood around,
As nought they saw but mantles green,
Covering all the ground.

O much I fear our King be slain,
Each to the other said:
If Robin come into this town,
We all of us be dead.

Full speedily all fled away,
Both yeomen stout, and knaves,
And old wives that could scarcely go,
Hobbled away on staves.

The King laugh'd loud and long, and all
Came back as them he bad,
And when they saw our comely King,
In truth their hearts were glad.

They ate and drank, and merry were,
And sang their songs with glee,
And then our comely King bespake
Sir Richard of the Lee.

He gave him back his land again,
A good man bad him be:
Then Robin thank'd our comely King,
And bent to him his knee.

Now but twelve months and three had pass'd,
To court since Robin went:
An hundred pounds, and wages too,
Of all his men he spent.

In every place where Robin came,
He laid his silver down,
Full freely, or for knight or squire,
And gat him great renown.

And by the time the year was out,
No man had he but twain,
Little John, and good Scathelock,
That might with him remain.

Now Robin saw young men to shoot,
Full fair upon a day,
And then, alas! cried Robin Hood,
My wealth is gone away.

Time was, I was an archer good,
Full strong my shafts did fly;
In all merry England there was not thought
One archer so good as I.

Alas! alas! said Robin Hood,
Alas and well-a-day,
If I dwell longer with the king,
My sorrow will me slay.

Then uprose quickly Robin Hood,
And to the King he went:
My lord the King of England,
Grant me my heart's content.

A chapel I made in Bernysdale,
That seemly is to see,
It is to Saint Mary Magdalen,
And there myself would be.

For thought thereof, these seven nights past,
I have not slept a wink:
Neither for these seven days long,
Could I or eat or drink.

My longing is for Bernysdale,
And so would I be there,
That I would walk with penance shirt
Thither, and feet all bare.

If it be so, then said the King,
And may no better be:
Seven nights will I give thee leave,
Not longer, to dwell from me.

Gramercy, lord, then Robin said,
And set him on his knee,
Right courteously he took his leave,
And to the green-wood went he.

It was upon a merry morn,
That he came to the green-wood,
And the merry notes of the little birds,
They to his heart were good.

'Tis many a day, said Robin Hood,
Since that I last was here;
Longing have I a little while,
To shoot at the fat dun deer.

Robin slew a full great hart,
His horn then he did blow,
The sound of his horn the forest through,
The outlaws all did know:

They gather'd them together straight,
Within an arrow's throw,
Seven score of strong young men,
Came ready in a row.

And fairly they took off their hoods,
And fairly bow'd the knee,
And said, O welcome, our master,
Under this green-wood tree.

Then Robin he dwelt in the green-wood,
Full two years and a score;
And for all the fear of Edward, King,
He would not leave it more.

A wicked woman it was, I wis,
That nigh was of his kin:
The Prioress of Kyrkesly,
She slew him to her sin.

It was Sir Roger of Doncaster,
This women did beguile,
It was all for the love of him,
She practised deadly wile.

And oft as they together were,
Their counsel was full ill,
How best to do that deadly deed,
And Robin Hood to kill.

Now Robin in his place grew sick,
And where he stood, he said,
To-morrow I must to Kyrkesly,
And skilfully be bled.

O then Sir Roger of Doncaster,
By the Prioress he lay,
And there they betrayed Robin,
Through their most wicked play.

May Christ have mercy on his soul,
That died upon the rood,
For he was a noble outlaw,
And to the poor was good.

APPENDIX.

THE characters investigated in the two following dissertations, by Mr. Hone in his "Year Book," and by Mr. Douce in his "Illustrations of Shakspeare," are so intimately connected with the history of Robin Hood and his companions, that this enlarged edition would be incomplete without their insertion in this Appendix, notwithstanding the quotations given from Mr. Tollet's description of his painted glass window in p. 32 *et seq.*, and of Maid Marian pp. 41 to 43, in the previous notes and illustrations to Robin Hood's life. Both Mr. Hone and Mr. Douce were such well-informed antiquaries, and deeply acquainted with the history, characters, manners, and customs of our ancestors, that it would be in vain almost to search further than they have done for elucidation upon these subjects.

DISSERTATION UPON

THE MORRIS DANCE AND MAID MARIAN, &c.

In the celebrated ancient window at the house of George Tollet, Esq., at Batley, in Staffordshire, there are twelve panes of glass representing the May-pole and eleven characters in the morris-dance.

The morris-dance, in which bells are gingled, or staves or swords clashed, was learned, says Dr. Johnson, by the Moors, and was probably a kind of Pyrrhick, or military dance. Blount says, "Morisco, a Moor; also a dance, so called, wherein there were usually five men, and a boy dressed in a girl's habit, whom they called the Maid Marrian, or, perhaps, Morian, from the Italian Morione, a head-piece, because her head was wont to be gaily trimmed up. Common people call it a morris-dance."

The morris-dance is presumed by Mr. Peck to have been first brought to England in the time of Edward III, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain, where he had been to assist Petro, king of Castile. He says, "This dance was usually performed abroad by an equal number of young men, who danced in their

shirts, with ribands, and little bells about their legs. But here, in England, they have always an odd person besides, being a boy dressed in a girl's habit, whom they call Maid Marian, an old favorite character in the sport." The morris-dance became introduced into the May-games, in which there was formerly a king and queen of the May: subsequently, it appears, the king of the May was disused, and Maid Marian was sole sovereign, or queen of the May.

Mr. Douce observes, in a dissertation on the ancient English morris-dance, at the end of his "Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of Ancient Manners," that both English and foreign glossaries uniformly ascribe the origin of this dance to the Moors; although the genuine Moorish, or Morisco dance, was, no doubt, very different from the European morris. Strutt cites a passage from the play of "Variety, 1649," in which the Spanish morisco is mentioned: and this, Mr. Douce adds, not only shows the legitimacy of the term morris, but that the real and uncorrupted Moorish dance was to be found in Spain, where it still continues to delight both natives and foreigners under the name of the *Fandango*. The Spanish morris was also danced at puppet-shows, by a person habited like a Moor, with castagnets; and Junius has informed us that the morris dancers usually blackened their faces with soot, that they might the better pass for Moors. Having noticed the corruption of the "*Pyrrhica Saltatio*" of the ancients, and the *uncorrupted morris dance*, as practised in France about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Mr. Douce says, "It has been supposed that the morris dance was first brought into England in the time of Edward III, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain, but it is much more probable that we had it from our Gallic neighbours, or even from the Flemings. Few if any vestiges of it can be traced beyond the reign of Henry VII, about which time, and particularly in that of Henry VIII, the churchwardens' accounts in several parishes afford materials that throw much light on the subject, and show that the morris dance made a very considerable figure in the parochial festivals.—We find also," Mr.

Douce continues, "that other festivals and ceremonies had their morris; as holy Thursday; the Whitsun ales; the bride ales, or weddings; and a sort of play or pageant, called the Lord of Misrule. Sheriffs, too, had their morris dance.—It is by no means clear that, at any time, Robin Hood and his companions were *constituent* characters in the morris."

Shakspeare makes mention of an English whitsun morrice dance, in the following speech of the dauphin in Henry V.

> "No, with no more, than if we heard that England,
> Were busied with a whitsun morrice daunce."

The following description of a morris dance occurs in "Cobbe's Prophecies, his Signes and Tokens, his Madrigalls, Questions and Answers, 1614."

> It was my hap of late, by chance,
> To meet a country morris dance,
> When, cheefest of them all, the foole,
> Plaied with a ladle——
> When every younger shak't his bells—
> And fine maid Marian, with her smoile,
> Shew'd how a rascall plaid the roile;
> But, when the hobby-horse did wihy,
> Then all the wenches gave a tihy:
> But when they gan to shake their boxe,
> And not a goose could catch a foxe,
> The piper then put up his pipes,
> And all the woodcocks looked like snipes, &c.

In Cotgrave's "English Treasury of Wit and Language, 1655," we read,—

> How they become the morris, with whose bells
> They ring all in to Whitson ales, and sweat
> Through twenty scarfs and napkins, till the hobby-horse
> Tire, and the maid Marian, resolv'd to jelly,
> Be kept for spoon-meat.

In relating particulars concerning morris dancing, reference must be had to a circumstantial and mirthful tract, printed in 1609, entitled "Old Meg of Herefordshire, *for a* Mayd

MARIAN, *and Hereford Towne for a* MORRIS DAUNCE; *or,* TWELVE MORRIS DAUNCERS *in Herefordshire of* TWELVE HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

To proceed orderly,—after the title-page comes the following dedication.—"*To that renowned* Ox-leach, OLD HALL, *Taborer of Herefordshire, and to his most invincible, weather-beaten,* NUT-BROWNE TABER, *being alreadie old and sound, threescore yeares and upward.*—To thee (old *Hall*), that for thy Age and Art mightest haue cured an Oxe that was eaten at Saint Quintins, that for thy warlike musicke mightest haue strucke up at Bullen, when great Drummes wore broken heades, thy little continuall Taber, had been enough to haue put spirit into all the Souldiers: now Tweire-pipe that famous Southren Taberer with the Cowleyan windpipe, who for whuling hath been famous through the Globe of the world, did neuer gain such renowne and credite by his pipe and Taber, as thou (old *Hall*) by striking up to these twelue hundred yeares Moris-dauncers: nor art thou alone (sweet *Hall*) a most exquisite Taber-man, but an excellent Oxe-leach, and canst pleasure thy neighbours. The people of Herefordshire are beholding to thee, thou giuest the men light hearts by thy Pype, and the women light heeles by thy Taber: O wonderful Pyper, O admirable Taber-man, make use of thy worth, euen after death, that art so famously worthy in thy life, both for thy age, skill, and thy vnbruized Taber, who these threescore yeares has kept—sound and vncrackt—neither lost her first voice, or her fashion: once for the Countryes pleasure imitate that Bohemian *Zisca*, who at his death gaue his Souldiers a strict command, to flea his skin off, and couer a Drum with it, that alive and dead, he might sound like a terror in the eares of his enemies: so thou, sweete *Hereford Hall*, bequeath in thy last will thy Velom-spotted skin, to couer Tabors: at the sound of which to set all the shires a dauncing."

After this merry dedication, the account begins thus jocundly:—"The courts of kings for stately measures: the city for light heels, and nimble footing: the country for shuffling dances: western men for gambols: Middlesex men for tricks aboue

ground: Essex men for the hay: Lancashire for hornpipes: Worcestershire for bagpipes: but Herefordshire for a morris dance, puts down, not only all Kent, but very near (if one had line enough to measure it) three quarters of Christendom. Neuer had Saint Sepulchres a treuer ring of bells: neuer did any silk-weauer keep brauer time with the knocke of the heel: neuer had the dauncing horse a better tread of the toe: neuer could Beuerley fair giue money to a more sound taborer, nor euer had Robin Hood a more deft Mayd-Marian."

Thus much for the honor of Herefordshire. The preceding paragraphs afford a specimen of the orthography, and the succeeding extracts, duly abbreviated, or with the spelling modernized, will give a fair notion of this remarkable performance:—"Understand therefore—that in the merriest month of the year, which last did take his leave of us, and in that month, as some report, lords went a Maying,—the spring brought forth, just about that time, a number of knights, esquires, and gallants, of the best sort, from many parts of the land, to meet at a horse-race near Hereford, in Herefordshire. The horses having, for that year, run themselves well nigh out of breath, wagers of great sums, according to the fashion of such pastimes, being won and lost, and the sports growing to the end, and shutting up, some wit, riper than the rest, fed the stomachs of all men, then and there present, with desire and expectation of a more fresh and lively meeting in the same place, to be performed this year of 1609. The ceremonies which their meeting was to stand upon were these, that every man should engage himself, under his hand, to bring, this present year, to the place appointed, running horses for the race, cocks of the game, to maintain battles, &c., with good store of money, to fly up and down between those that were to lay wagers. He that first gave fire to this sociable motion, undertook to bring a *hobby-horse* to the race, that should outrun all the nags which were to come thither, and hold out in a longer race."

When the time arrived—"Expectation did within few days make Hereford town show like the best peopled city. Inns were

lodgings for lords: Baucis and Philæmon's house (had it stood there) would have been taken up for a knight. The streets swarmed with people—staring and joyfully welcoming whole bravies of gallants, who came bravely flocking on horse-back, like so many lusty adventurers. Bath made her waters to boil up, and swell like a spring-tide, with the overflowing of her own tears, to see her dearest guests leave her, for the love of a horse-race at Hereford,—the number of them being at least two or three hundred. Amongst many of the better ranks, these marched with the foremost;—lord Herbert, of Ragland, sir Thomas Somerset, Charles Somerset, count Arundel's two sons, sir Edward Swift, sir Thomas Mildemay, sir Robert Yaxley, sir Robert Carey, sir John Philpot, sir Ed. Lewes, sir Francis Lacon, sir James Scudamore, sir Thomas Cornwall, sir Robert Boderham, sir Thomas Russell, sir — Bascarvile, sir Thomas Conisby, sir George Chute.—These were but a small handful to those rich heaps that there were gathered together. But by these, that had the honor to be the leaders, you may guess what numbers were the followers."

At the appointed day "there was as much talking, and as much preparation, for the *hobby-horse* promised the last year, as about dieting the fairest gelding this year upon whose head the heaviest wagers were laid.—To perform a race of greater length, of greater labor, and yet in shorter time, and by feeble, unexercised, and unapt creatures, that would be an honor to him that undertook it, that would be to Herefordshire a glory, albeit it might seem an impossibility.—Age is nobody, in trials of the body, when youth is in place; it gives the other the bucklers: it stands and gives aim, and is content to see youth act, while age sits but as a spectator, because the one does but study and play over the parts, which the other hath discharged in this great and troublesome theatre. It was therefore now plotted to lay the scene in age, to have the whole comedy presented, fathers to be the actors, and beardless boys the spectators. Sophocles, because he was accused of imbecility and dotage, should rehearse his Œdipus Coloneus, while the

senate, and his own wild-brain sons, stood by, and were the audience; and, to set out this scene with mirth as well as with wonder, the state of the whole act was put into a morris-dance."

Now, then, to set forth these performers and their show—as nearly as may be in the language of the old narrator—

THE MORRIS AND ITS OFFICERS.

Two *musicians* were appointed to strike up, and to give the alarm: the one of them (*Squire* of Hereford) was a squire born, and all his sons squires in their cradles. His instrument, a treble violin, upon which he played any old lesson that could be called for: the division he made on the strings being more pleasing than the diapason. "In skill he outshines blind Moone, of London, and hath outplayed more fiddlers than now sneak up and down into all the taverns there. They may all call him their father, or, if you reckon the years rightly which are scored upon his head, the musician's grandsire, for this tuneable *squire* is 108 years old." Next to him went old *Harrie Rudge*, the taborer. "This was old *Hall* of Hereford; the waits of three metropolitan cities make not more music than he can with his pipe and tabor, if, at least, his head be hard-braced with nappie ale. This noble old *Hall*, seeing that Apollo was both a fidler and a quack-salver, being able to cure diseases, as well as to harp upon one string, would needs be free of two companies as well (that is to say), the sweet company of musicians, and that other, which deals in salves and plasters; for he both beats a tabor with good judgment, and (with better) can help an ox if he find himself ill at ease. The wood of this old *Hall's* tabor should have been made a pail to carry water in, at the beginning of king Edward the sixth's reign: but *Hall*, being wise, because he was even then reasonably well stricken in years, saved it from going to the water, and converted it, in those days, to a tabor. So that his tabor hath made batchelors and lasses dance round about the May pole threescore sumners, one after another in order, and

is yet not worm-eaten. And noble *Hall* himself hath stood (like an oak) in all storms, by the space of fourscore and seventeen winters, and is not yet falling to the ground."

Whifflers.—The marshals of the field were four: these had no great stomach to dance in the morris, but took upon them the office of whifflers. 1. *Thomas Price* of Clodacke, a subsidy man; and one upon whose cheeks age had written 105 years. 2. *Thomas Andros* of Begger Weston, a subsidy man; for he carried upon his back the weighty burden of 108 years, and went away with them lightly. 3. *William Edwards* of Bodenham (his name is in the king's books likewise), and unto him had time also given the use of 108 years: and, besides the blessings of so many years, the comfort of a young wife, and, by that wife, a child of six years old. 4. *John Sanders* of Wolford, an ironworker; the hardness of which labor carried him safely over the high hill of old age, where she bestowed upon him 102 years.—These four *whifflers*, casting up what all their days which they had spent in the world could make, found that they amounted to 423 years; so that if the rest of their dancing brother-hood had come short of their account, and could not (every man) make up one hundred years, these offered were able to lend them three-and-twenty years; but the others had enough of their own, and needed not to borrow of any man.

See how the *morris-dancers* bestir their legs. Lift up your eyes, leap up behind their heads that stand before you, or else get upon stalls, for I hear their bells, and behold, here they come.—

1. Of *twelve* in the whole team, the foreman was *James Tomkins*, of Lengerren, a gentleman by birth, neither loved of fortune, nor hated of her; for he was never so poor as to be pitied, nor ever so rich as to be envied; when fourscore and eighteen years old he married a wife of two-and-fifty years old; "she brought him a child that is now eight years old (living), the father himself having now the glass of his life running to fill up the full number of 106 yeares."

2. After him comes, lustily dancing, *John Willis*, of Dormington, a bone-setter, his dancing fit to his weight of ninety-seven years. "His purpose in being one of the Morris was both honest and charitable; for he bestowed his person upon them, with intent to be ready at hand if any dislocation should be wrought upon any joynt in his old companions by fetching lofty tricks—which by all means possible they were sworn to avoid."

3. Room for little *Dick Phillips*, of Middleton—how nimbly he shakes his heels! Well danced, old heart of oak; and yet, as little as he seems, his courage is as big as the hobby-horses, for the fruits of his youth, gathered long agon, are not yet withered. His eldest son is at this present four score years of age, and his second son may now reckon three score; at our lady-day last he made up the years of his life just 102.

4. Now falls into his right place *William Waiton*, of Marden, with 102 years at his heels. "He was an old fisher; and of a clean man, an excellent fowler."

5. Here slips in *William Mosse*, who, contrary to his name, had no moss at his heels. He bears the age of 106.

6. Now cast your eyes upon *Thomas Winney*, of Holmer, an honest subsidy man, dwelling close by the town. "He dances with 100 years about him, wheresoever he goes, if the church yard and cramp take him not."

7. But how like you *John Lace*, of Madley, a tailor, and an excellent name for it? "In his youth he was a hosier—born before the dissension between cloth breeches and velvet breeches; he carries four score and seventeen summers about him, and faine would borrow three years of James Tomkins [the foreman] to make him an hundred; and James may very well spare them, and yet leave three toward the interest."

8. But what say you to *John Careless?* "You let him passe by you, and seem as careless as he, a man of four score and sixteen at Midsummer next; he hath been a dweller in Homlacie three score years and two, and known to be a tall man, till now he begins to be crooked, but for a body and a beard he becomes any Morris in Christendom."

9. At the heels of him follows his fellow *William Maio*, of Egelton, an old soldier, and now a lusty laborer and a tall man. "Forty years since, being grievously wounded, he carried his liver and his lights home half a mile, and you may still put your finger into them but for a thin skin over them; and for all these storms he arrives at four score and seventeen, and dances merrily."

10. But look you who comes—"*John Hunt*, the HOBBY-HORSE, wanting but three of an hundred, 'twere time for him to forget himself, and sing but *O*, nothing but *O, the hobby-horse is forgotten;* the Maid-Marian, following him, offers to lend him seven years more, but if he would take up ten in the hundred his company are able to lend them."

11. But now give way for the MAID MARIAN, old "*Meg Goodwin*, the famous wench of Erdistand, of whom Master Weaver, of Burton, that was four score and ten years old, was wont to say, she was twenty years older than he, and he died ten years since. This old *Meg* was at Prince Arthur's death, at Ludlow, and had her part in the *dole;* she was three score years (she saith) a maid, and twenty years otherwise, that's what you will, and since hath been thought fit to be a Maid-marian—at the age of 120."

12. Welcome *John Mando*—he was born at Cradly, a very good two hand sword man, of the age of 100, on black Monday last, and serves in place of Morgan Deede, who climbs to that age within four years, here present dwelling in the town, but, he has a great desire to keep his bed and be spared.

These eighteen persons, the fidler, the taborer, the four whifflers, and the twelve dancers in this morris, carried about them 1837 years. "And for a good wager it were easy to find, in Herefordshire, four hundred persons more, within three years over or under an hundred years; yet the shire is no way four and twenty miles over."

For the fashion observed amongst the musicians and the habit of the dancers, take a view of both. "The musicians and the twelve dancers, had long coats of the old fashion, high

sleeves gathered at the elbows, and hanging sleeves behind; the stuff, red buffin, striped with white, girdles with white, stockings white, and red roses to their shoes; the one six, a white jews cap with a jewel, and a long red feather; the other, a scarlet jews cap, with a jewel and a white feather; so the hobby-horse, and so the maid-marian was attired in colours; the whifflers had long staves, white and red.—After the dance was ended, divers courtiers that won wagers at the race, took those colours and wore them in their hats."

THE SPEECH BEFORE THE MORRIS.

Ye servants of our mighty king,
That came from court one hundred mile
To see our race, and sport this spring;
Ye are welcome, that is our country stile,
And much good do you, we are sorry
That *Hereford* hath no better for you.
A horse, a cock, trainsents, a bull,
Primero, gleek, hazard, munchance;
These sports through time are grown so dull,
As good to see a Morris dance;
Which sport was promised in jest,
But paid as truly as the rest,
A race (quoth you) behold a race,
No race of horses but of men,
Men born not ten miles from this place,
Whose courses outrun hundreds ten.
A thousand years on ten men's backs,
And one supplies what other lacks.

LENVOY.

This is the Lenvoy (you may gather)
Gentlemen, yeomen, grooms, and pages,
Lets pray, Prince *Henry* and his father
May outlive all these ten men's ages.
And he that mocks this application,
Is but a knave past reformation.

After this speech, "old *Hall* struck up, and the Morris-dancers fell to footing, whilst the whifflers in their office made room for the hobby-horse."

The narrative concludes, by enquiring—"And how do you like this Morris-dance of Herefordshire? Are they not brave old youths? Have they not the right footing, the true tread, comely lifting up one leg, and active bestowing of the other. Kemp's morris to Norwich* was no more to this than a gaillaird. on a common stage, at the end of an old dead comedy, is to a coranto danced on the ropes. Here is a dozen of younkers, that have hearts of oak at four score years, backs of steel at four score and ten, ribs of iron at a hundred, bodies sound as bells, and healthful (according to the Russian proverb) as an ox, when they are travelling down the hill, to make that 120. These showed in their dancing, and moving up and down, as if Mawlborne hills,† in the very depth of winter—all their heads covered with snow—shook and danced at some earthquake. Shall any man lay blame on these good old fathers, because at such years they had not spent all their wild oats? No, we commend (as Tully saith) a young man, that smells somewhat of the old signior, and can but counterfeit gravity in his cheeks; and shall we not heave up with praises an old man, that at 108 years end, can rake his dead embers abroad, and show some coals of the lusty *Juventus* glowing in him even then? Such an old madcap deserves better to be the stuffing of a chronicle, than Charing Cross does for loosing his rotten head, which (through age being wind shaken) fell off, and was trod upon in contempt. Were old Stowe alive, here were taboring work enough for his pen; but, howsoever, so memorable a monument of man shall not wither in oblivion, if the sweet April showers, which drop from the Muses' water, can make it grow up and flourish.—A dishonor were it to poets and all pen-men, if acts of this worth should not encomiastically be celebrated and recorded.—Oh! if all the people in

* Another Morris-dance of ancient celebrity.

† Malvern Hills, visible from Hereford.

the kingdom should have their days stretched out to the length of these men, clerks and sextons might go and hang themselves in the bell ropes ; they would have cold doings : prodigal heirs might beg, they should hardly find an almanac that would tell them when their lands should come to their hands by the death of their fathers, for they themselves would have white beards before they could arrive at their full age. It were no hoping after dead men's shoes, for both upper leather and soles would be worn out to nothing. As great pity it were (O old *Margaret*, or rather new *Mayd-Marion*) that all men's wives (especially those that like dutch-watches have alarums in their mouths) should last so long as thou hast done : how would the world be plagued ?—Alas ! what do I see ? Hold *Taborer !* stand *Hobby-horse ! Morris-dancers* lend us your hands ! Behold one of the nimble-legged old gallants is by chance fallen down, and is either so heavy, so weary, so inactive of himself, or else five of his fellows are of such little strength, that all their arms are put under him, as levers, to lift him up, yet the good old boys cannot set him on his feet. Let him not lie for shame, you that have, all this while, seen him dance, and though he be a little out of his part, in the very last act of all, yet hiss at nothing—but rather—*Summi* Jovis *causa plaudite.*"

After a lapse of two centuries we find like liveliness, in like old age, in the same county. Mr. Brand states, that a few years ago, a May game, or morris dance, was performed by the following eight men, in Herefordshire, whose ages, computed together, amounted to 800 years : J. Corley, aged 109 ; Thomas Buckley, 106 ; John Snow, 101 ; John Edey, 104 ; George Bailey, 106 ; Joseph Medbury, 100 ; John Medbury, 95 ; Joseph Pidgeon, 79.

It must be borne in mind, as before stated, that, however the morris-dance may be treated as a part of the May-sports, it is only an interpolation upon those gambols, and is, of itself, an entirely distinct merriment. It was also intro-

duced at other festivals, and danced separately, as may still be seen, although much reduced, and deprived of its chief characters, in many parts of the country.

Parishes had their established morris-dancers, and sometimes lent the dresses of the dancers to the neighbouring parishes. In a rare tract, of the time of queen Elizabeth, called, "Plaine Percevall the Peace-maker of England," mention is made of "a stranger, which, seeing a quintessence (beside the foole and the maid Morian) of all the picked youth, strained out of a whole endship, footing the morris about a may-pole, and he not hearing the minstrelsie for the fiddling, the tune for the sound, nor the pipe for the noise of the tabor, bluntly demaunded if they were not all beside themselves, that they so lip'd and skip'd without an occasion."

Mr. Tollet, in his account of the morris-dancers upon his window, describes his maid Marian, as queen of the May, (No. 2), having a golden crown on her head, and in her left hand a red pink, as an emblem of summer. Her vesture was once fashionable in the highest degree. Margaret, the eldest daughter of Henry VII, was married to James, king of Scotland, with the crown upon her head, and her hair hanging down. Betwixt the crown and the hair was a very rich coif, hanging down behind the whole length of the body. This simple example explains the dress of this maid Marian's head. Her coif is purple, her surcoat blue, her cuffs white, the skirts of her robe yellow, the sleeves of a carnation colour, and her stomacher red, with a yellow lace in cross bars. In Shakspeare's play of Henry VIII, Anne Boleyn, at her coronation, is "in her hair;" or, as Holinshed says, her hair hanged down, but on her head she had a coif, with a circlet about it, full of rich stones.

After the Morris degenerated into a piece of coarse buffoonery, and Maid Marian was personated by a clown, this once elegant Queen of May obtained the name of "Malkin." Bishop Percy

and Mr. Steevens agree in making Maid Marian the mistress of Robin Hood. "It appears from the old play of 'The Downfall of Robert Earl of Huntingdon,' 1601," says Mr. Steevens, "that Maid Marian was originally a name assumed by Matilda, the daughter of Robert Lord Fitzwalter, while Robin Hood remained in a state of outlawry:—

> Next 'tis agreed (if thereto shee agree)
> That faire Matilda henceforth change her name:
> And, while it is the chance of Robin Hoode
> To live in Sherewodde a poor outlaw's life,
> She by Maide Marian's name be only call'd.
> *Mat.* I am contented: reade on, Little John:
> Henceforth let me be nam'd *Maide Marian*."

This lady was poisoned by King John at Dunmow Priory, after he had made several fruitless attempts on her chastity. Drayton has written her legend."

In Shakerley Marmion's "Antiquary," act 4, is the following passage: "A merry world the while, my boy and I, next Midsommer Ale, *I* may serve for a fool, and *he* for Maid Marrian." Shakspeare, Hen. IV, Part 1, A. iii. sc. 3, speaks of Maid Marian in her degraded state. It appears by an extract in Lysons's Environs of London, that in the reign of Henry VIII, at Kingston-upon-Thames, the character was performed by a woman who received a shilling each year for her trouble.

But Mr. Douce considers this story as a dramatic fiction: He says, "None of the materials that constitute the more authentic history of Robin Hood prove the existence of such a character in the shape of his mistress. There is a pretty French pastoral drama of the eleventh or twelfth century, entitled *Le Jeu du berger et de la bergère*, in which the principal characters are *Robin* and *Marion*, a shepherd and shepherdess. The great intercourse between the countries might have been the means of importing this name amidst an infinite variety of other matters; and there is, indeed, no other mode of accounting for the introduction of a name which never occurs in the page of English History. The story of Robin Hood was, at a very

early period, of a dramatic cast; and it was perfectly natural that a principal character should be transferred from one drama to another. It might be thought, likewise, that the English Robin deserved his Marian as well as the other. The circumstance of the French Marian being acted by a boy contributes to support the above opinion; the part of the English character having been personated, though not always, in like manner."

Mr. Tollet describes a character upon his window as in the full clerical tonsure, with a chaplet of white and red beads in his right hand (No. 3); and, expressive of his professed humility, his eyes are cast upon the ground. His corded girdle and his russet habit denote him to be one of the Franciscan order, or one of the Grey Friars. His stockings are red, his red girdle is ornamented with a golden twist, and with a golden tassel. At his girdle hangs a wallet for the reception of provision, the only revenue of the mendicant orders of religious, who were named Walleteers, or Budget-bearers. Mr. Steevens supposes this Morris Friar designed for Friar Tuck, chaplain to Robin Hood, as King of May. Mr. Douce says: "There is no very ancient mention of this person, whose history is very uncertain. Drayton has thus recorded him, among other companions of Robin Hood:—

> Of Tuck, the merry Friar, which many a sermon made
> In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws, and their trade.
>
> Polyolb. Song xxvi.

He is known to have formed one of the characters in the May Games during the reign of Henry VIII, and had been probably introduced into them at a much earlier period. From the occurrence of this name on other occasions, there is good reason for supposing that it was a sort of generic application for any friar, and that it originated from the dress of the order, which was *tucked* or folded at the waist by means of a cord or girdle. Thus Chaucer, in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, says of the Reve:—

> *Tucked* he was, as in a frere aboute

and he describes one of the friars in the Sompnour's Tale:—

With scrippe and tipped staff, *ytucked* hie.

This friar maintained his situation in the Morris under the reign of Elizabeth, being thus mentioned in Warner's Albion's England:—

Tho' Robin Hood, liell John, *frier Tucke*, and Marian, deftly play:

but is not heard of afterwards. In Ben Jonson's Masque of Gipsies, the clown takes notice of his omission in the dance." The friar's coat, as appears from the parish accounts of Kingston-upon-Thames was generally of russet. In an ancient drama, called the play of Robin Hood, very proper to be played in May games, a friar, whose name is Tuck, is one of the principal characters. He comes to the forest in search of Robin Hood, with an intention to fight him, but consents to become chaplain to his lady.

The Foole of the Morris Dance, in Mr. Tollet's window, (No. 12), he speaks of as the counterfeit fool, that was kept in the royal palace, and in all great houses, to make sport for the family. Mr. Tollet's fool appears with all the badges of that office; the bauble in his hand and a coxcomb hood, with asses ears, on his head. The top of the hood rises into the form of a cock's neck and head, with a bell at the latter. Minshew's Dictionary, 1627, under the word cock's comb, observes, that "natural idiots and fools have [accustomed] and still do accustome themselves to weare in their cappes cocke's feathers, or a hat with the necke and head of a cocke on the top, and a bell thereon." The hood of Mr. Tollet's fool is blue, guarded or edged with yellow at its scalloped bottom; the doublet red, striped across, or rayed with a deeper red, and edged with yellow; the girdle yellow: the left-side hose yellow, with a red shoe; and the right-side hose blue, soled with red leather.

Scarlet, Stokesley, and Little John appear to have been Robin Hood's companions, from the following old ballad :—

I have heard talk of Robin Hood,
Derry, Derry, Derry down,
And of brave *Little John*,
Of Friar Tuck and *Will Scarlet*,
Stokesley and Maid Marrian,
Hey down, &c.

In the parish accounts of Kingston-upon-Thames is an entry "for Little John's cote." Mr. Douce says, Little John "is first mentioned, together with Robin Hood, by Fordun, the Scottish Historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century, and who speaks of the celebration of the story of these persons in the theatrical performances of his time, and of the minstrels' songs relating to them, which he says the common people preferred to all other romances."

The Taborer of the Morris Dance in Mr. Tollet's window is represented as No. 9. To prove this figure to be Tom the Piper, Mr. Tollet cites Mr. Steevens' quotation of these lines from Drayton's third eclogue :—

Myself above Tom Piper to advance,
Who so bestirs him in the Morris dance
For penny wage.

He adds, that his tabor, tabor-stick, and pipe, attest his profession ; the feather in his cap, his sword, &c., may denote him to be a squire-minstrel, or a minstrel of the superior order. Chaucer says, "Minstrels used a red hat," and in the window Tom Piper's bonnet is red, faced, or turned up with yellow, something like red muffetees at his wrists, over his doublet is a red garment, like a short cloak with arm-holes, and with a yellow cape, his hose red, and garnished across and perpendicularly on the thighs, with a narrow yellow lace : his shoes are brown.

The Hobby-horse, No. 5, Mr. Tollet is induced to think, is the king of the May, as figured in his window, from the crimson foot-cloth fretted with gold, the golden bit, the purple bridle, with a golden tassel, and studded with gold, the man's purple mantle with a golden border, which is latticed with purple, his golden crown, purple cap, with a red feather and with a golden knop. "Our Hobby," he adds, "is a spirited horse of paste-board, in which the master dances and displays tricks of legerdemain, such as the threading of the needle, the mimicking of the whigh-hie, and the daggers in the nose, &c., as Ben Jonson, edit. 1756, vol. i. p. 171, acquaints us, and thereby explains the swords in the man's cheeks. What is stuck in the horse's mouth I apprehend to be a ladle, ornamented with a ribbon. Its use was to receive the spectators' pecuniary donations.—The colour of the hobby horse is a reddish white, like the beautiful blossom of the peach-tree. The man's coat, or doublet, is the only one upon the window that has buttons upon it, and the right side of it is yellow, and the left red."

Mr. Douce says, "Whoever happens to recollect the manner in which Mr. Bayes's troops, in 'the Rehearsal,' are exhibited on the stage, will have a tolerably correct notion of a morris hobby horse. Additional remains of the Pyrrhic, or sword-dance, are preserved in the daggers stuck in the man's cheeks, which constituted one of the hocus-pocus or legerdemain tricks practised by this character, among which were the threading of a needle, and the transferring of an egg from one hand to the other, called by Ben Jonson *the travels of the egg*. To the horse's mouth was suspended a ladle, for the purpose of gathering money from the spectators. In later times the fool appears to have performed this office, as may be collected from Nashe's play of 'Summer's last Will and Testament,' where this stage-direction occurs: 'Ver goes in and fetcheth out the Hobby-Horse and the Morrice Daunce, who daunce about.' Ver then says:—'About, about, lively, put your horse to it, reyne him harder, jerke him with your wand, sit fast, sit fast, man; *Foole, hold up your ladle there.*" Will Summers is made to say, 'You

friend with the Hobby Horse, goe not too fast, for fear of wearing out my lord's tyle stones with your hob-nayles.' Afterwards there enter three clowns and three maids, who dance the morris, and at the same time sing the following song :—

Trip and goe, heave and hoe,
Up and downe, to and fro,
From the towne, to the grove,
Two and two, let us rove,
A Maying, a playing ;
Love hath no gainsaying :
So merrily trip and goe."

Lord Orford in his Catalogue of English Engravers, under the article of Peter Stent, describes two paintings at Lord Fitzwilliam's, on Richmond Green, which came out of the old neighbouring palace. They were executed by Vinckenboom, about the end of the reign of James I, and exhibit views of the above palace ; in one of these pictures a Morris Dance is introduced, consisting of seven figures, viz. a fool, a Hobby-horse, a piper, a Maid Marian, and three other dancers, the rest of the figures being spectators. Of these, the first four and one of the dancers, Mr. Douce reduced in a plate from a tracing by the late Capt. Grose. Mr. Douce says, "The fool has an inflated bladder, or eel-skin, with a ladle at the end of it, and with this he is collecting money. The piper is pretty much in his original state ; but the hobby-horse wants the legerdemain apparatus, and Maid Marian is not remarkable for the elegance of her person. A short time before the Revolution in France, the May Games and Morris Dance were celebrated in many parts of that country, accompanied by a fool and a *Hobby-horse.* The latter was termed *un chevalet ;* and, if the authority of Minshew be not questionable, the Spaniards had the same character under the name of *tarasca.*"*

There are other representations of figures in the Morris-dance

---

* Brand.

on Mr. Tollet's window, but they seem to have no other specific character than that of dancers.

The following ballad is annexed by Mr. Hone to the foregoing dissertation upon the Morris Dance. Although it does not elucidate any of the characters in it, yet the editor cannot omit its insertion, as it enables him to say a few words upon his very great favorite poet, George Wither; a selection from whose works, in three volumes, he printed at his own press, with a life of the poet, which he did not, for reasons unnecessary to be mentioned, ever publish, although some few mutilated copies, surreptitiously obtained, fell into the hands of a bookseller, and have been sold to the public.

It was in the year 1809, that the editor's attention was first directed to Wither's publications, and his admiration of his poems gradually increased as many of his rare pieces fell into his hands, particularly those which Mr. Park had collected, with many of that gentleman's valuable annotations interspersed in their pages. He was encouraged to proceed in his selection by his warm-hearted friend and schoolfellow, Charles Lamb, who,

it will be seen by the following letter; first became acquainted with Wither's poems through the editor.

"Dear Gutch,—I did not see your brother who brought me Wither, but I understood he said, you were daily expecting to come to town: this has prevented my writing. The books have pleased me excessively; I should think you could not have made a better selection. I never saw *Philarete* before,—judge of my pleasure. I could not forbear scribbling certain critiques in pencil on the blank leaves. Shall I send them, or may I expect to see you in town? Some of them are remarks on the character of Wither, and of his writings. Do you mean to have any thing of that kind? What I have said on Philarete is poor, but I think some of the rest not so bad; perhaps I have exceeded my commission in scrawling over the copies, but my delight therein must excuse me, and pencil marks will rub out. Where is the life? Write, for I am quite in the dark.

"Your's, with many thanks,

"C. LAMB."

"Perhaps I could digest the few critiques prefixed to the Satires, Shepherd's Hunting, &c., into a short abstract of Wither's character and works, at the end of the life. But, may be, you don't want anything, and have said all you wish in the life."

April 9th, 1810, London.

These pencil-marks Charles Lamb afterwards requested the editor to return to him, and they formed the matter of one of his papers in the Collection of his Works first published in 1818, (vol. II. p. 119), from which the following notice of some of Wither's pieces is selected.

"Whether encaged, or roaming at liberty, Wither never seems to have abated a jot of that free spirit which sets its mark upon his writings, as much as a predominant feature of independence impresses every page of our late glorious Burns; but the elder poet wraps his proof-armour closer about him; the other wears his too much outwards; he is thinking too

much of annoying the foe, to be quite easy within. The spiritual defences of Wither are a perpetual source of inward sunshine; the magnanimity of the modern is not without its alloy of soreness, and a sense of injustice, which seems perpetually to gall and irritate. Wither was better skilled in the 'sweet uses of adversity;' he knew how to extract the 'precious jewel' from the head of the 'toad,' without drawing any of the 'ugly venom' along with it. The prison notes of Wither are finer than the wood notes of most of his poetical brethren. The description in his fourth eclogue of his *Shepherd's Hunting*, which was composed during his imprisonment in the Marshalsea, of the power of the Muse to extract pleasure from common objects, has been oftener quoted, and is more known than any part of his writings. Indeed the whole eclogue is in a strain so much above not only what himself, but almost what any other poet has written, that he himself could not help noticing it; he remarks, that his spirits had been raised higher than they were wont, "through the love of poesy." The praises of poetry have been often sung in ancient and in modern times; strange powers have been ascribed to it of influence over animate and inanimate auditors; its force over fascinated crowds has been acknowledged; but before Wither, no one ever celebrated its power *at home*; the wealth and the strength which this divine gift confers upon its possessor. Fame, and that, too, after death, was all which hitherto poets had promised themselves from their art. It seems to have been left to Wither to discover that poetry was a present possession, as well as a rich reversion; and that the Muse had promise of both lives, of this, and of that which is to come."

During the last thirty years, the beauties in Wither's works have become better known and appreciated. They formed the subject of many papers in the *British Bibliographer*. But whoever wishes to become better acquainted with Wither's life and character, will find both admirably pourtrayed by Robert Aris Willmott, Esq., in the *Lives of Sacred Poets*, published under the direction of the Committee of General Literature, &c., by J. W. Parker, 1834.

Wither was perhaps as voluminous a writer as Defoe. The Editor has scraped together between seventy and eighty of his pieces in verse and prose; and he possesses a manuscript copy of his version of the Psalms, apparently in Wither's handwriting.

When at the age of seventy-two, and a prisoner in Newgate, Wither expressed his cares and consolations in the following ballad. It is extracted from the *Speculum Speculativum*, 1660.

THE CONTENTED MAN'S MORRICE.

False world, thy malice I espie
With what thou hast designed;
And therein with thee do comply,
Who likewise are combined:
But, do thy worst, I thee defie,
Thy mischiefs are confined.

From me, thou my estate hast torn,
By cheatings me beguiled:
Me thou hast also made thy scorn;
With troubles me turmoiled:
But to an heritage I'm born,
That never can be spoiled.

So wise I am not, to be mad,
Though great are my oppressions:
Nor so much fool as to be sad,
Though robb'd of my possessions:
For, cures of sores may be had,
And grace for all transgressions.

These words in youth my motto were,
And mine in age I'll make them,—
I neither have, nor want, nor care;
When also first I spake them,
I thought things would be as they are,
And meekly therefore take them.

The riches I possess this day
  Are no such goods of fortune
As kings can give or take away,
  Or tyrants make uncertain:
For hid within myself are they
  Behinde an unseen curtain.

Of my degree, but few or none
  Were dayly so frequented;
But now I'm left of every one,
  And therewith well contented:
For, when I am with God alone,
  Much folly is prevented.

Then, why should I give way to grief!
  Come, strike up pipe and tabor:
He that affecteth God in chief,
  And as himself his neighbour,
May still enjoy a happy life,
  Although he lives by labor.

Not me alone have they made poor,
  By whom I have been cheated;
But very many thousands more
  Are of their hopes defeated:
Who little dreamed heretofore
  Of being so ill treated.

Then, if my courage should be less
  Than their's who never prized
The resolutions I profess
  (And almost idolized),
I well deserv'd in my distress
  To be of all despised.

Our sad complaints, our sighs and tears,
  Make meat nor clothing cheaper:
Vain are our earthly hopes and fears,
  This life is but a vapor;
And therefore, in despight of cares,
  I'll sing, and dance, and caper.

Though food nor raiment left me were,
I would of wants be dreadless;
For then I quickly should be there
Where bread and cloth are needless;
And in those blessings have my share,
Whereof most men are heedless.

I then should that attain unto
For which I now endeavour;
From my false lovers thither go,
Where friendship faileth never;
And, through a few short pangs of woe,
To joys that last for ever.

For service done, and love exprest,
(Though very few regard it)
My country owes me bread at least;
But if I be debarr'd it,
Good conscience is a dayly feast,
And sorrow never marr'd it.

My grand oppressors had a thought,
When riches they bereaved,
That then, my ruine had been wrought;
But, they were quite deceived:
For them the devil much mis-taught
When that weak snare they weaved.

If in those courses I had gone
Wherein they are employed,
Till such achievements had been won
As are by them enjoyed,
They might have wager'd ten to one
I should have been destroyed.

But proofs have now confirmed me
How much our vice offendeth,
And what small helps our virtues be
To that which God intendeth,
Till he himself shall make us free,
And our defects amendeth.

No one is from corruption clear;
Men are depraved wholly:
Mere cruelties their mercies are,
Their wisdom is but folly;
And, when most righteous they appear,
Then are they most unholy.

There is no trust in temp'ral things,
For they are all unsteady:
That no assurance from them springs,
Too well I find already;
And that ev'n parliaments and kings,
Are frail, or false, or giddy.

All stands upon a *tott'ring* wheel,
Which never fixt abideth;
Both commonweals and kingdoms reel:
He that in them confideth,
(Or trusts their faith) shall mischiefs feel,
With which soe'er he sideth.

This wit I long ago was taught,
But then I would not heed it:
Experience must by fools be bought,
Else they'll not think they need it.
By this means was my ruin wrought;
Yet they are knaves who did it.

When to the ground deprest I was,
Our mushrooms and our bubbles,
Whom neither truth, nor wit, nor grace,
But wealth and pride ennobles,
As cruel were as they are base,
And jeer'd me in my troubles.

And when their hate these had made known,
New mischiefs it begat me:
For ev'ry rascal dirty clown,
Presumed to amate me;
And all the curs about the town
Grinn'd, snarl'd and barked at me.

Since, therefore, 'tis not in my power,
(Though oft I fore-discern them)
To shun the world's despights one hour,
Thus into mirth I'll turn them :
And neither grieve, nor pout, nor lowre,
But laugh, and sing, and scorn them.

This fit, at sev'nty years and two,
And thus to spend my hours,
The world's contempt inclines me to,
Whilst she my state devours ;
If this be all that she can do,
A fig for all her powers.

Yet I and shee, may well agree,
Though we have much contended :
Upon as equal terms are we
As most who have offended :
For, I sleight her, and she sleights me,
And there's my quarrel ended.

This only doth my mirth allay,
I am to some engaged,
Who sigh and weep, and suffer may,
Whilst thus I sing encaged:
But I've a God, and so have they,
By whom that care's asswaged.

And he that gives us in these days
New lords, may give us new laws;
So that our present puppet-plays,
Our whimsies, brauls, and gew-gaws,
May turned be to songs of praise,
And holy hallelujahs.

A DISSERTATION ON THE

ANCIENT ENGLISH MORRIS DANCE,

By FRANCIS DOUCE, Esq.

It is the observation of an elegant writer, that disquisitions concerning the manners and conduct of our species in early times, or indeed at any time, are always curious at least and amusing. An investigation of the subject before us, if completely and successfully performed, would serve to fill up a chasm in the history of our popular antiquities: but this must not be expected. The culpable indifference of historical writers to private manners, and more especially to the recreations and amusements of the common people, has occasioned the difficulties that always attend enquiries of this nature, many of which are involved in impenetrable darkness; whilst others can only receive illustration from detached and scattered facts accompanied by judicious inferences and opinions.

It will be necessary in the first place, to attempt some definition of what the morris dance originally was: this may be best accomplished by the aid of etymology, which will generally be found a faithful guide, when managed with discretion. It seems, however, on the present occasion to have been too slightly treated in a work of considerable labour and ingenuity, the author of which has expressed an opinion that the Morris dance originated from that part of the ancient ceremony of the feast of fools, in which certain persons habited like buffoons, with bells, &c., joined in a dance. He then proceeds as follows, "The word *Morris* applied to the dance is usually derived from *Morisco*, which in the Spanish language signifies

a *Moor*, as if the dance had been taken from the Moors; but I cannot help considering this as a mistake, for it appears to me that the *Morisco* or Moor dance is exceedingly different from the morris-dance formerly practised in this country; it being performed with the castanets or rattles, at the ends of the fingers, and not with bells attached to various parts of the dress.* I shall not pretend to investigate the derivation of the word *Morris;* though probably it might be found at home: it seems, however, to have been applied to the dance in modern times, and, I trust, long after the festival to which it originally belonged was done away and had nearly sunk into oblivion."†

Now if the term in question had been *exclusively* used in England, there would have been some weight in these observations; but when we find it adopted by most of the European nations to express a dance, the origin of which both English and foreign glossaries uniformly ascribe to the Moors, we must pause at least before we consent to abandon the only clue that presents itself to assist us. The genuine Moorish or Morisco dance was, no doubt, very different from the European *morris;* but there is scarcely an instance in which a fashion or amusement that has been borrowed from a distant region has not in its progress through other countries undergone such alterations as have much obscured its origin. This remark may be exemplified in chess and cards, which, beyond all doubt, were invented in India or China, and spread, by means of the Arabians, progressively throughout Spain, Italy, France, England, and the North of Europe. But the above writer has cited a passage from the play of *Variety*, 1649, in which the *Spanish Morisco* is mentioned; and this not only shows the legitimacy of the term *morris*, but that the real and uncorrupted Moorish dance was to be found in Spain, where it still continues to delight both natives and strangers under the name of the *fandango*. It may be likewise remarked, that the

* This will hereafter appear to be a mistake.

† Strutt's "Sports and pastimes of the people of England," p. 171.

exquisitely pretty music to this lively dance is undoubtedly Moorish.* The Spanish morris was also danced at puppet-shows by a person habited like a Moor, with castagnets; and Junius [Du Jon] has informed us that the morris dancers usually blackened their faces with soot, that they might the better pass for Moors.†

Some have sought the origin of the morris in the *Pyrrhica saltatio* of the ancients, a military dance which seems to have been invented by the Greeks, and was afterwards adopted by the Salii or priests of Mars. This continued to be practised for many ages, till it became corrupted by figures and gesticulations foreign to its original purpose. Such a dance was that well known in France and Italy by the name of the dance of fools or *Matachins*, who were habited in short jackets with gilt-paper helmets, long streamers tied to their shoulders, and bells to their legs. They carried in their hands a sword and buckler, with which they made a clashing noise, and performed various quick and sprightly evolutions.‡ A species of this sword dance by some means or other got introduced into

* "Hist. of musick," vol. iv. 388, by Sir John Hawkins, who was clearly of opinion that the morris dance was derived from the Moors.

† "Etymologicum Anglicanum." In further corroboration of this deduction of the morris dance, the following words may be adduced; MORESQUE, a kind of grotesque painting, sometimes called Arabesque, and used in embroidery and damasking. MORISCLE, and MOURICLE, a gold coin used in Spain by the Moors, and called in the barbarous Latin of the fourteenth century *morikinus*. See Carpentier, "Suppl. ad glossar. *Ducangian*, v. *Morikinus*. MORRIS WAX, called likewise *mores wax*, in the "Garbelling of spices," 1594, 4to. To these the *morris-pike* may perhaps be added. It is probable that the English terms *morris* and *morice* have been corrupted from *mores*, the older and more genuine orthography.

‡ Tabourot "Orchesographie," 1589, 4to. p. 97, where the several postures of this dance are described and represented. The Pyrrhic dance appears to have travelled from Greece into the North. See Olaus Magnus, "De gentibus septentrionalibus," lib. xv. c. 23, 24, 25, 26, 27.

England, where it has generally and unaccountably been exhibited by women, whose dexterous feats of tumbling and dancing with swords at fairs, and in the minor theatres, are still remembered by many persons.* A very learned writer, speaking of the *Pyrrhica saltatio*, informs us, that "The common people in many parts of England still practise what they call a *Morisco dance*, in a wild manner, and as it were in armour, at proper intervals striking upon each others staves, &c."† This might be found on enquiry to differ from the common morris, and to be a mixture of the old Pyrrhic and Moorish dances. Such a one may be alluded to in *The second part of King Henry the Sixth*, Act iii. Sc. 1,

> "———————— I have seen him
> Caper upright like a *wild Morisco*,
> Shaking his bloody darts, as he his bells."

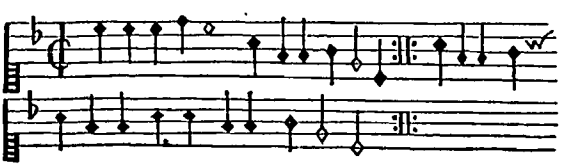
Before we proceed to an examination of the more immediate object of this essay, the English morris, it may be as well to lay before the reader a short description of the *uncorrupted morris dance*, as practised in France about the beginning of the sixteenth century. It has been preserved by Tabourot, the oldest and by far the most curious writer of any other on the art of dancing.‡ He relates, that in his youthful days it was

* It is remarkable that the same practice should be found in the island of Ceylon. Knox tells us that "A woman takes two naked swords, under each arm one, and another she holds in her mouth, then fetcheth a run and turns clean over, and never touches the ground till she lights on her feet again holding all her swords fast." *Hist. of Ceylon*, p. 99.

† Wise's "Enquiries concerning the first inhabitants, language, &c. of Europe," p. 51.

‡ Jean Tabourot, canon and official of the cathedral of Lengres, published his "Orchesographie et traicté en forme de dialogue par lequel toutes personnes peuvent facilement apprendre et practiquer l'honneste exercice des dances," 1589, 4to., under the anagrammatized name of Thoinot Arbeau. He died in 1595, at the age of 66. His work is equally curious and uncommon.

the custom in good societies for a boy to come into the hall, when supper was finished, with his face blackened, his forehead bound with white or yellow taffeta, and bells tied to his legs. He then proceeded to dance the *Morisco*, the whole length of the hall, backwards and forwards, to the great amusement of the company.* He hints that the bells might have been borrowed from the *crotali* of the ancients in the Pyrrhic dance. He then describes the more modern morris dance, which was performed by striking the ground with the forepart of the feet; but, as this was found to be too fatiguing, the motion was afterwards confined to the heel, the toes being kept firm, by which means the dancer contrived to rattle his bells with more effect. He adds that this mode of dancing fell into disuse, as it was found to bring on gouty complaints. This is the air to which the last-mentioned morris was performed.



It has been supposed that the morris dance was first brought

* But the French morris can be traced to a much earlier period. Among other instances of the prodigality of Messire Gilles de Raiz, in 1440, *morris dancers* are specified. Lobineau, "Hist. de Bretagne," ii. 1069. In the accounts of Olivier le Roux, treasurer to Arthur III, duke of Bretagne in 1457, is this article: "à certains compaignons qui avoient fait plusieurs esbatemens de *morisques* et autres jeux devant le duc à Tours, vi. escus." Id. 1205. At a splendid feast given by Gaston de Foix at Vendôme in 1458, "foure yong laddes and a damosell attired like savages daunced (by good direction) an excellent *Morisco*, before the assembly." Favine's "Theater of honour," p. 345, and see Carpentier, "Suppl. ad glossar." *Ducangian* v. *Morikinus*. Coquillart, a French poet, who wrote about 1470, says that the Swiss danced the *Morisco* to the beat of the drum. *Œuvrés*, p. 127.

into England in the time of Edward the Third, when John of Gaunt returned from Spain;* but it is much more probable that we had it from our Gallic neighbours, or even from the Flemings. Few if any vestiges of it can be traced beyond the reign of Henry the Seventh; about which time, and particularly in that of Henry the Eighth, the churchwardens' accounts in several parishes afford materials that throw much light on the subject, and show that the morris dance made a very considerable figure in the parochial festivals. A late valuable writer has remarked that in some places the May-games of Robin Hood were nothing more than a morris dance, in which *Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian*, and *Frier Tuck*, were the principal personages, the others being a clown or fool, the hobby-horse, the taborer, and the dancers, who were more or less numerous;† but this seems to be a mistake. The May-games of Robin Hood appear to have been principally instituted for the encouragement of archery, and were generally accompanied by morris dancers, who, nevertheless, formed but a subordinate part of the ceremony. It is by no means clear that at any time Robin Hood and his companions were *constituent* characters in the morris. There were, besides, May-games of a more simple nature, being merely dances round a May-pole, by the lads and lasses of the village, and the undoubted remains of the Roman Floralia.‡ We find also that other festivals and ceremonies had their morris, as Holy Thursday; the Whitsun-ales; the bride-ales, or weddings,§

* Peck's "Memoirs of Milton," 135. What this writer has added on the subject of the morris dance is not very interesting; but he is certainly mistaken in his explanation of *five, seven, or nine men's morris.*

† Ritson's "Robin Hood," I. cii.

‡ See particularly Stubbes's "Anatomie of abuses," p. 109, edit. 1595, 4to.

§ In Laneham's "Letter from Kenilworth or Killingworth castle," a bride-ale is described, in which mention is made of "a lively Moris dauns, according too the auncient manner: six dauncerz, Mawdmarion, and the fool."

and a sort of play or pageant called the lord of misrule. Sheriffs too had their morris dance.* The reader may be amused with the following account of the lord of misrule, as it contains a description of an attendant morris. It has been fortunately handed down to us by a puritanical writer of the reign of Elizabeth, whose loud ravings against the fashionable excesses of his countrymen have contributed to furnish posterity with the completest information respecting a considerable portion of the manners and customs of the above period that is any where to be found. These are his words: "First, all the wilde heads of the parish, flocking togither, chuse them a graund captaine (of mischiefe) whome they innoble with the title of *my Lord of misrule*, and him they crowne with great solemnitie, and adopt for their king. This king annoynted, chooseth foorth twentie, fourtie, threescore or a hundred lustie guttes like to himselfe to waite upon his lordly majesty, and to guarde his noble person. Then every one of these his men, he investeth with his liveries of greene, yellow, or some other light wanton collour. And as though they were not (bawdy) gawdy ynough, I should say, they bedecke themselves with scarffes, ribbons and laces hanged all over with golde ringes, precious stones, and other jewels: this done, they tie about either legge twentie or fourtie belles, with rich handkerchiefe in their handes, and sometimes laide a crosse over their shoulders and neckes, borrowed for the most part of their pretie *Mopsies* and loving *Bessies*, for bussing them in the darke. Thus all things set in order, then have they their hobby-horses, their dragons and other antiques, togither with their baudie *pipers*, and thundering *drummers*, to strike up the *Devils Daunce* withall: then marteh this heathen company towards the church and churche-yarde, their pypers pypyng, their drummers thundering, their stumpes dauncing, their belles iyngling, their handkercheefes fluttering about their heades like madde men, their hobbie horses, and other

* See Stowe's "Survay of London," 1618, 4to, p. 161.

monsters skirmishing amongst the throng: and in this sorte they goe to the church (though the minister be at prayer or preaching) dauncing and swinging their handkerchiefes over their heades in the church like Devils incarnate, with such a confused noise, that no man can heare his owne voyce. Then the foolish people they looke, they stare, they laugh, they fleere, and mount upon formes and pewes, to see these goodly pageants solemnized in this sort. Then after this about the church they goe againe and againe, and so foorth into the church yard, where they have commonly their sommer haules, their bowers, arbours, and banquetting houses set up, wherein they feast, banquet, and daunce all that day, and (peradventure) all that night too. And thus these terrestrial *furies* spend the Sabboth day. Another sort of fantasticall fooles bring to these helhoundes (the Lord of misrule and his complices) some bread, some good ale, some new cheese, some olde cheese, some custardes, some cracknels, some cakes, some flaunes, some tartes, some creame, some meat, some one thing, some another; but if they knewe that as often as they bring anye to the maintenance of these execrable pastimes, they offer sacrifice to the Devill and Sathanas, they would repent and withdrawe their handes, which God graunt they may."* Another declaimer of the like kind, speaking of May games and morris dances, thus holds forth; "The abuses which are committed in your may-games are infinite. The first whereof is this, that you doe use to attyre in womans apparrell whom you doe most commenly call *may-marrions*, whereby you infringe that straight commaundement whiche is given in Deut. xxii. 5, that men must not put on womens apparrell for feare of enormities. Nay I myself have seene in a may game a troupe, the greater part wherof hath been men, and yet have they been attyred so like unto women, that theyr faces being hidde (as they were indeede) a man coulde not discerne them from women. The seoond abuse, which of all other is the

* Stubbes's "Anatomie of Abuses," p. 107.

greatest, is this, that it hath been toulde that your morice dauncers have daunced naked in nettes: what greater entisement unto naughtines could have been devised? The third abuse is, that you (because you will loose no tyme) doe use commonly to runne into woodes in the night time, amongst maidens, to fet bowes, in so muche as I have hearde of tenne maidens who went to fet May, and nine of them came home with childe."* He seems likewise to allude to a character of the *Devil* in the May games, of which no mention is elsewhere made.

In the course of time these several recreations were blended together so as to become almost indistinguishable. It is however very certain that the May games of Robin Hood, accompanied with the morris, were at first a distinct ceremony from the simple morris, which when Warner lived was celebrated about the season of Easter, and before the May games: he thus speaks of them,

"At Paske begun our Morrise, and ere Penticost our May."†

It is probable that when the practice of archery declined, the May games of *Robin Hood* were discontinued, and that the morris dance was transferred to the celebration of Whitsuntide, either as connected with the Whitsun ales, or as a separate amusement. In the latter instance it appears to have retained one or two of the characters in the May pageants; but no uniformity was or possibly could be observed, as the arrangement would vary in different places according to the humour or convenience of the parties.

The painted glass window belonging to George Tollett, Esq., at Betley, in Staffordshire, exhibits, in all probability, the most curious as well as the oldest representation of an English

* Fetherston's "Dialogue agaynst light, lewde, and lascivious dauncing," 1582, 12mo. sign. D. 7. See a passage to the same purpose in Northbrooke's "Treatise against dicing, dancing, &c." 1597, 4to, fo. 68 b.

† Albion's England, 1612, p. 121.

May game and morris dance, that is anywhere to be found.* The learned possessor of this curiosity, to whom the readers of Shakspeare are much indebted not only for this, but for many other valuable communications, has supposed that the window might have been painted in the youthful days of Henry the Eighth, when he delighted in May games; but it must be observed that the dresses and costume of some of the figures are certainly of an older period, and may, without much hazard, be pronounced to belong to the reign of Edward the Fourth. Among other proofs that could be adduced, it will be sufficient to compare it with the annexed print of another morris dance.† This is a copy from an exceedingly scarce engraving on copper by Israel Von Mecheln, or Meckenen, so named from the place of his nativity, a German village on the confines of Flanders, in which latter country this artist appears chiefly to have resided; and therefore in most of his prints we may observe the Flemish costume of his time. From the pointed shoes that we see in one of the figures, it must have been executed between the year 1460, and 1470; about which latter period the broad-toed shoes came into fashion in France and Flanders. It seems to have been intended as a pattern for goldsmith's work, probably a cup or tankard.

The artist, in a fancy representation of foliage, has introduced several figures belonging to a Flemish May-game morris, consisting of the lady of the May, the fool, the piper, two morris dancers with bells and streamers, and four other dancing characters, for which appropriate names will not easily be found. The similitude between some of the figures in this print and others in Mr. Tollett's window is very striking, and shows that the period of execution, as to both, was nearly the same. One objection to this opinion will, no doubt, present itself to the skilful spectator, and that is the shape of the letters which form the inscription A MERRY MAY on the pane of glass

* Steevens's Shakspeare, at the end of the play of "King Henry IV. part I."

† [Given as a frontispiece to the present volume.—*Editor.*]

No. 8. These are comparatively modern, and cannot be carried further back than the time of Elizabeth: but this will be accounted for hereafter.

The above curious *painting* has furnished the means of ascertaining some of the personages of which the May games and morris consisted at the time of its execution. To trace their original forms and numbers, or the progressive changes they underwent, with any degree of accuracy, would be perhaps impossible; because not only the materials for such an attempt are extremely few, but a variety of circumstances contributed to constitute their differences even during the same period. Wherever we turn, nothing but irregularity presents itself. Sometimes we have a lady of the May, *simply*, with a friar Tuck; and in later times a Maid Marian remained without even a Robin Hood or a friar. But consistency is not to be looked for on these occasions, when we find, as has been remarked, that the May games, those of Robin Hood, the ales, and the morris dances, were blended together as convenience or caprice happened to dictate.*

The several characters that seem in more ancient times to have composed the May game and morris were the following: Robin Hood, Little John, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian the queen or lady of the May, the fool, the piper, and several morris dancers, habited, as it appears, in various modes. Afterwards a hobby horse and a dragon were added. To avoid the confusion

* There is a remarkable instance of the corruption that has been gradually introduced into popular ceremonies, in the celebration of the gunpowder-plot; in which, formerly, Guy Faux was ignominiously carted, in company with the Pope and the Devil, all of whom were afterwards consigned to the flames: whereas at present we have only the image of a fellow, or sometimes a real boy bedizened with gilded rags, ruffles, and powdered periwig, under the appellation of *Poor Guy*, for whom the attendants seem to crave charity. The Pope has been long dismissed by proclamation or act of parliament; and the Devil is probably forgotten by some, or become an object of too much terror with others to be sported with.

that might otherwise ensue, it will be best to speak of each character by itself.

I. ROBIN HOOD. The history of this celebrated outlaw has been so ably and ingeniously treated by Mr. Ritson, and every fact that relates to him so minutely developed, that it will be long before any novelty shall be discovered of sufficient importance to deserve attention. It appears that in the May game he sometimes carried a painted standard.*

II. LITTLE JOHN. The faithful companion of Robin Hood, but of whom little that is not fabulous has been handed down to us. He is first mentioned, together with Robin Hood, by Fordun the Scottish historian, who wrote in the fourteenth century, and who speaks of the celebration of the story of these persons in the *theatrical performances* of his time, and of the minstrels' songs relating to them, which he says the common people preferred to all *other romances*.†

III. FRIAR TUCK. There is no very ancient mention of this person, whose history is very uncertain. Drayton has thus recorded him, among other companions of Robin Hood:

> "Of *Tuck the merry friar* which many a sermon made
> In praise of Robin Hood, his outlaws and their trade."‡

He is known to have formed one of the characters in the May games during the reign of Henry the Eighth, and had been probably introduced into them at a much earlier period. From the occurrence of this name on other occasions, there is good

* Churchwardens' accounts at Kingston, in Lysons's "Environs of London," vol. i. p. 227. The learned author of this interesting work has remarked that he had found no entries at Kingston, relating to the May games, after the 29 Hen. 8; but they certainly continued, as parochial ceremonies, in other places to a much later period. In the churchwardens' accounts of Great Marlow it appears, that dresses for the morris dance were lent to neighbouring parishes so late as 1629. See Langley's "Antiquities of Desborough," 4to. 1797.

† Fordun's "Scotichronicon," 1759, folio, tom. ii. p. 104.

‡ "Polyolbion," song xxvi.

reason for supposing that it was a sort of generic appellation for any friar, and that it originated from the dress of the order, which was *tucked* or folded at the waist by means of a cord or girdle. Thus Chaucer, in his prologue to the *Canterbury tales*, says of the Reve;

"*Tucked* he was, as is a frere aboute:"

And he describes one of the friars in the Sompnour's tale:—

With scrippe and tipped staff, *ytucked* hie.

This friar maintained his situation in the morris under the reign of Elizabeth, being thus mentioned in Warner's Albion's England:—

Tho' Robin Hood, liell John, *frier Tucke*, and Marian, deftly play:

but is not heard of afterwards. In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Gipsies*, the clown takes notice of his omission in the dance.*

IV. MAID MARIAN. None of the materials that constitute the more authentic history of Robin Hood, prove the existence of such a character in the shape of his mistress. There is a pretty French pastoral drama of the eleventh or twelfth century, entitled *Le jeu du berger et de la bergère*, in which the principal characters are *Robin* and *Marion*, a shepherd and shepherdess. Mr. Warton thought that our English Marian might be illustrated from this composition; but Mr. Ritson is unwilling to assent to this opinion, on the ground that the French Robin and Marion "are not the Robin and Marian of Sherwood." Yet Mr. Warton probably meant no more than that the name of Marian had been suggested from the above drama, which was a great favourite among the common people in France, and performed much about the season at which the May games were celebrated in England. The great intercourse between the countries might have been the means of importing this name amidst an infinite variety of other matters; and there is indeed no other mode of accounting for the introduc-

* Ben Jonson's Works, 1756, vol. vi. p. 93.

tion of a name which never occurs in the page of English history.* We have seen that the story of Robin Hood was, at a very early period, of a dramatic cast; and it was perfectly natural that a principal character should be transferred from one drama to another. It might be thought likewise that the English Robin deserved his Marian as well as the other. The circumstance of the French Marion being acted by a boy contributes to support the above opinion; the part of the English character having been personated, though not always, in like manner. Little, if any, stress can be laid on the authority of an old play cited by Mr. Steevens to prove that "*Maid Marian* was originally a name assumed by *Matilda* the daughter of Robert Lord Fitzwater, while Robin Hood remained in a state of outlawry."† This is rather to be considered as a dramatic fiction, designed to explain a character the origin of which had been long forgotten.

Maid Marian not only officiated as the paramour of Robin Hood in the May games, but as the *queen or lady of the May*, who seems to have been introduced long before the games of

* *Marian*, or as it is more frequently written *Marion*, is not formed, as some French writers have supposed, from Mary and Ann, but more probably from *Mariamne* the wife of Herod, whose name seems borrowed from that of Miriam מרים the prophetess, the sister of Aaron. Miriam is said to come from a Syrian word signifying *mistress*, or from מרר *marar*, *bitterness*. The name of *Mary*, evidently contracted from *Miriam* or *Mariamne*, does not occur till the time of the daughter of Joachim and Anne, the mother of Christ, at which period we find other *Maries* in the New Testament. It is remarkable that *Maria*, from Marius, should not occur among the Roman names of women, in like manner as we have Julia, Cornelia, Fulvia, Proba, Valeria, &c., from Julius, Cornelius, Fulvius, Probus, and Valerius. The facetious and eccentric Edmund Gayton, in the dedication to his "Festivous notes on Don Quixote," speaks of *Mayd Myriam*. He perhaps imagined that the morris dance had been suggested by the prophetess and her dancing women with their timbrels.

† Steevens's Shaksp. viii. 530.

Robin Hood. In the isle of Man they not only elected a queen of May, but likewise a queen of winter.* Gatherings for the May lady, as anciently for Robin Hood, were lately kept up at Cambridge, but in a corrupted form, the real occasion of this ceremony being, in all probability, quite unknown to the gatherers. There can be no doubt that the queen of the May is the legitimate representative of the Goddess Flora in the Roman festival.

The introduction of Robin Hood into the celebration of May probably suggested the addition of a *king* or *lord of the May*. In the year 1306 Robert Bruce caused himself to be crowned at Scone, and a second time by the hands of his mistress, the adulterous wife of the earl of Bowhan, who changed his name to David. It is reported that he said to his own wife on this occasion, "Yesterday we were but earl and countess, to-day we are king and queen;" to which she replied, "True, you are now *a summer king*, but you may not chance to be a winter one." Matthew of Westminster has recorded this fact, and Holinshed, who copies him, makes the lady say, that "she feared they should prove but as *a summer king and queen, such as in country townes the yong folkes chose for sport to dance about may-poles.*" In 1557, there was a May game in Fenchurch-street, with a *Lord and Lady of the May*, and a morris dance.† Both these characters are introduced in a morris in Fletcher's play of *The two noble Kinsmen*, Act iii.; and, in the *Knight of the burning Pestle*, a grocer's apprentice personates a lord of the May dressed out in "scarves, feathers, and rings." He is made to deliver a speech from the conduit to the populace, of which this is a part;

"London, to thee I do present the merry month of May,
Let each true subject be content to hear me what I say:
For from the top of conduit-head, as plainly may appear,
I will both tell my name to you, and wherefore I came here.

* Waldron's "History of the isle of Man," 12mo. p. 95, where he has described the mock battle between the queens.

† Strype's "Eccl. memorials," iii. 376.

My name si *Rafe*, by due descent, though not ignoble I,
Yet far inferiour to the flock of gracious grocery.
And by the common counsel of my fellows in the Strand,
With gilded staff, and crossed skarfe, the *May lord* here I stand."

A lord and lady are still preserved in some places where the Whitsun-ales continue to be celebrated, and perhaps in other morrises during the season of May.

To return to Maid Marian—She was usually dressed according to the fashion of the time, as we may collect from the figures of her in Mr. Tollett's window, and Israel's engraving. In both the kirtle and petticoat are alike; and the pendent veil is supported by the hand. The English figure holds a flower, and has a fancy coronet as *queen of the May*. The other has apparently an apple in her hand, and her steeple head dress is what was actually worn in the middle of the fifteenth century by queens and ladies of high rank. Barnaby Rich, who wrote in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., inveighing against the foppery of men's apparel, exclaims, "And from whence commeth this wearing, and this embroidering of long locks, this curiosity that is used amongst men, in frizeling and curling of their haire, this gentlewoman-like starcht bands, so bé-edged and belaced, *fitter for Maid Marion in a Moris dance*, then for him that hath either that spirit or courage that shold be in a gentleman?"*

It appears that the Lady of the May was sometimes carried in procession on men's shoulders; for Stephen Batman, speaking of the Pope and his ceremonies, states that he is carried on the backs of four deacons, "after the maner of carying whytepot queenes in Western May games."† Her usual gait

* "The honestie of this age," 1615, 4to, p. 35.

† What these ladies exactly were it is not easy to comprehend. Whitepot in old cookery was a kind of custard, made in a crust or dish with cream, eggs, pulse of apples, sugar, spices, and sippets of *white* or manchet bread. It is possible therefore that Maid Marian, being occasionally personated by a kitchen malkin or cook wench, obtained the title of a *white-pot queen*.

was nice and affected.* Thus in the description of the family visit to the royal guest, in the old ballad of *The Miller of Mansfield*:—

"And so they jetted down towards the king's hall:
The merry old miller, with his hands on his side;
His wife, like Maid Marian, did *mince* at that tide."

But although the May-lady was originally a character of some delicacy and importance, she appears to have afterwards declined in both respects. In the time of Elizabeth she was usually represented by some smooth-faced and effeminate youth.† Falstaff tells the hostess, that "for *womanhood* Maid Marian may be the Deputy's wife of the ward to her;" meaning perhaps that she was as masculine in her appearance as the country clown who personated Maid Marian: and in Fletcher's *Monsieur Thomas*, Dorothea desires her brother to conduct himself with more gentleness towards his mistress, unless he would chuse to marry *Malkyn* the *May lady;* another allusion to the degraded state of Maid Marian, who is here assimilated to a vulgar drudge or scullion both in name and condition. But during the whole of her existence mirth and gaiety were her constant companions. The translator of *The hospitall of incurable Fooles*, 1600, 4to. speaking of Acco, the old woman who became mad on beholding her ugliness in a mirror, says that "one while shee could be *as merrie as Maid Marrian.*" Nor was this character, even in later times, *uniformly* vulgar. Every one will call to mind Nicholas Breton's pretty sonnet of *Phillyda and Corydon*, where the shepherdess,

"———— with garlands gay
Was made the Lady of the Maye."

v. The Fool. This character in the morris was the same, in point of dress, as the domestic buffoon of his time. In Mr. Tollett's window he has additional bells tied to his arms and ancles as a morris dancer, but is, in other respects, the English

* "Golden books of the leaden Goddes," 1577, 4to, fo. 30.

† Greene's "Quip for an upstart Courtier," sig. D. 3.

fool of the fifteenth century. Yet the habit of this eccentric person was not the same in all countries, nor even uniform in the same country. Accordingly he is very differently accoutred in the Flemish print. He has a cap or hood with asses' ears, and a row of bells for the crest; in his left hand he carries a bauble, and over his right arm hangs a cloth or napkin. He wears behind what seems intended for a purse or wallet, with which the fool in the old German prints is generally exhibited. It is certain that there was only one fool in the morris: and therefore Mr. Steevens and Mr. Tollett have erred in supposing the figure No. 1 in the window, to be the *Bavian fool with the bib*. The former gentleman had apparently misconceived the following passage in Fletcher's *Two noble Kinsmen*,

"——————— and next the fool,
The *Bavian*, with long tail and eke long tool."

Here are not *two* fools described. The construction is, "next comes the fool, *i. e.* the Bavian fool, &c." This might have been the *idiot* fool, and so denominated from his wearing a bib, in French *bavon*,* because he drivelled. Thus in *Bonduca*, Act v., Decius talks of a "dull *slavering* fool." The tricks of the Bavian, his tumbling and barking like a dog, suggested perhaps by the conduct of Robert the Devil when disguised as a fool in his well known and once popular romance, were peculiar to the morris dance described in *The two noble Kinsmen*, which has some other characters that seem to have been introduced for stage effect, and not to have belonged to the

† *Bavon* or *bavette*, is from *bave*, spittle. Hence the middle age Latin term for a fool, *bavosus*. See Ducange Gloss. This is a very plausible etymology, and might stand well enough by itself; but it must not be concealed that in some of the Northern languages *bavian* signifies a monkey or *baboon*. Whether Fletcher, who seems the only writer that has made use of this word, applied it to the fool in question on account of the *monkey tricks* that he played, remains to be ascertained. If we could discover the names of the characters in a French, Dutch, or German morris of this time, some light might be thrown on the subject.

genuine morris. The tail was the fox tail that was sometimes worn by the morris fool; and the long tool will be best understood by referring to the cut of the idiot in the *genuine* copy of the *Dance of Death*, usually, though improperly, ascribed to Holbein, and by reflecting on some peculiar properties and qualifications of the idiot character.

What Mr. Tollett has termed a *bib* was in fact no uncommon part of the male dress in the fifteenth century. Some of the contemporary figures of the Beverley minstrels are so habited, as well as others in the representation of the Whitsun ale at Cirencester.* Whatever character the supposed Bavian of the window was, he is also found in the print by Israel on the left hand of the fool, not only in the same habit, but with his hands and feet precisely in similar attitudes. There is no doubt that the morris dance was in some respects a sort of *chironomy;* and Higgins, the English editor of Junius's *Nomenclator*, has actually translated the word *chironomia* by "the morrise dance."† In the absence of some of the other characters of the morris dance, the exertions of the fool appear to have been increased, as we learn from Ben Jonson's *Entertainment at Althrope:*—

> "But see the hobby-horse is forgot.
> Foole, it must be your lot,
> To supply his want with faces
> And some other buffon graces.
> You know how."—

Coryat relates that near Montreuil he saw "*a Whitsuntide foole* disguised like a foole, wearing a long coate, wherein there were many severall peeces of cloth of divers colours, at the corners whereof there hanged the tailes of squirrels: he bestowed a little peece of plate, wherein was expressed the effigies of the Virgin Mary, upon every one that gave him

* See Carter's "Specimens of ancient sculpture and painting," vol. ii. pl. xiii. Nos. 5 and 13, and pl. xxxvi.

† Edit. 1585, 12mo. p. 299. See likewise the article *chironomus* in p. 521.

money: for he begged money of all travellers for the benefite of the parish church."* The romance of *The Spiritual Quixote* has a morris fool with a fox's tail depending from his cap, and a sheep bell attached to his hinder parts. In the modern morris dance the fool is continued, but his real character and dress appear to have been long since forgotten. In some places he is called *the Squire.*

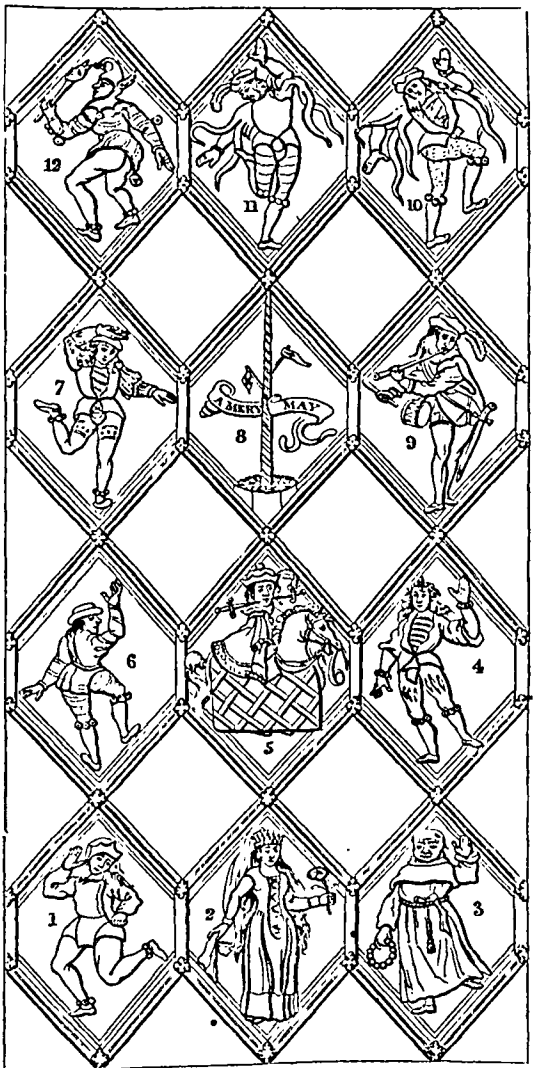
VI. THE PIPER. Sometimes called Tom Piper, an obvious and necessary attendant on a morris, and who requires very little illustration. Mr. Steevens has already referred to Drayton for the mention of him; and Spenser, in his third eclogue, speaking of the rimes of bad poets, observes that

"*Tom Piper* makes as little melodie;"

whence we are to infer that his music was not usually of the very best kind. The resemblance as to attitude and dress, between the figures of this character in Mr. Tollett's painting and the Flemish print, is remarkable. In both we have the sword and feather. What Mr. Tollett has termed his *silver shield* seems a mistake for the lower part or flap of his stomacher.

VII. THE HOBBY-HORSE; of which the earliest vestige now remaining is in the painted window at Betley. It has been already observed that he was often omitted in the morris. During the reign of Elizabeth the Puritans made considerable havoc among the May-games, by their preachings and invectives. Poor Maid Marian was assimilated to the whore of Babylon; friar Tuck was deemed a remnant of Popery, and the Hobby-horse an impious and Pagan superstition; and they were at length most completely put to the rout as the bitterest enemies of religion. King James's book of sports restored the lady and the hobby-horse: but during the commonwealth they were again attacked by a new set of fanatics; and together with the whole of the May festivities, the Whitsun-ales &c., in many parts of England degraded. At the restoration they

* Coryat's "Crudities," 1611, 4to. p. 9.



Morris Dance, from Mr. Hall's Painted Window.

were once more revived.* The allusions to the omission of the Hobby-horse are frequent in the old plays, and the line

"For O, for O, the hobby horse is forgot,"

is termed by Hamlet *an epitaph*, which Mr. Theobald supposed, with great probability, to have been satirical. The following extract from a scene in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Women pleased*, Act iv. will best show the sentiments of the Puritans on this occasion, and which the author has deservedly ridiculed:

HOB.

Surely I will dance no more, 'tis most ridiculous,
I find my wife's instructions now mere verities,
My learned wife's, she often hath pronounc'd to me
My safety; *Bomby* defie these sports, thou art damn'd else.
This beast of Babylon I will never back again,
His pace is sure prophane, and his lewd wi-hees,
The sons of Hymyn and Gymyn, in the wilderness.

FAR.

Fie, neighbour *Bomby*, in your fits again?
Your zeal sweats, this is not careful, neighbour,
The *Hobby-horse* is a seemly *Hobby-horse.*

HOB.

The beast is an unseemly, and a lewd beast,

* Yet, in the reign of Charles the Second, Thomas Hall, another puritanical writer, published his "Funebria Floræ, the downfall of May-games," 1661, 4to., in which, amidst a great deal of silly declamation against these innocent amusements, he maintains that "Papists are forward to give the people May-poles, and the Pope's Holiness with might and main keeps up his superstitious festivals as a prime prop of his tottering kingdome." That "by these sensual sports and carnal-flesh-pleasing wayes of wine, women, dancing, revelling, &c., he hath gained more souls, than by all the tortures and cruel persecutions that he could invent." He adds, "What a sad account will these libertines have to make, when the Lord shall demand of them, where wast thou such a night? why, my Lord, I was with the prophane rabble, stealing May-poles; and where wast thou such a day? why, my Lord, I was drinking, dancing, dallying, ranting, whoring, carousing, &c."

And got at Rome by the Pope's coach-horses,
His mother was the mare of ignorance.

SOTO.

Cobler thou ly'st, and thou wert a thousand coblers
His mother was an honest mare, and a mare of good credit,
Scorn'd any coach-horse the Pope had; thou art foolish,
And thy blind zeal makes thee abuse the beast.

HOB.

I do defie thee, and thy foot-cloth too,
And tell thee to thy face, this prophane riding
I feel it in my conscience, and I dare speak it,
This unedified ambling hath brought a scourge upon us.

FAR.

Will you dance no more, neighbour?

HOB.

Surely no,
Carry the beast to his crib: I have renounc'd him
And all his works.

SOTO.

Shall the Hobby-horse be forgot then?
The hopeful Hobby horse, shall he lye founder'd?

HOB.

I cry out on 't,
'Twas the forerunning sin brought in those tilt-staves,
They brandish 'gainst the church, the Devil calls *May poles.*

SOTO.

Take up your horse again, and girth him to ye,
And girth him handsomely, good neighbour *Bomby.*

HOB.

I spit at him.

SOTO.

Spit in the horse-face, cobler?
Thou out-of-tune psalm-singing slave; spit in his visnomy?

HOB.

I spit again, and thus I rise against him:
Against this beast, that signify'd destruction,
Foreshew'd i'th' falls of monarchies.

SOTO.

I'th' face of him?

Spit such another spit, by this hand cobler,
I'll make ye set a new piece o' your nose there;
Take 't up I say, and dance without more bidding,
And dance as you were wont; you have been excellent,
And are still but for this new nicety,
And your wife's learned lectures; take up the Hobby-horse,
Come, 'tis a thing thou hast lov'd with all thy heart, Bomby,
And wouldst do still, but for the round-breech'd brothers.
You were not thus in the morning; take 't up I say,
Do not delay, but do it: you know I am officer
And I know 'tis unfit all these good fellows
Should wait the cooling of your zealous porridge;
Chuse whether you will dance, or have me execute;
I'll clap your neck i'th' stocks, and there I'll make ye
Dance a whole day, and dance with these at night too.
You mend old shoes well, mend your old manners better,
And suddenly see you leave off this sincereness,
This new hot batch, borrowed from some brown baker,
Some learned brother, or I'll so bait ye for 't,
Take it quickly up.

HOB.

I take my persecution,
And thus I am forc'd a by-word to my brethren.

The Hobby-horse was represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle or foot-cloth that nearly touched the ground. The performer on this occasion exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship. In Sampson's play of *The Vow-breaker*, 1636, a miller personates the hobby-horse; and being angry that the mayor of the city is put in competition with him, exclaims, "Let the major play the hobby-horse among his brethren, and he will, I hope our towne-lads cannot want a hobby-horse. Have I practic'd my reines, my careeres, my prancers, my ambles, my false trotts, my smooth ambles and Canterbury paces, and shall master major put me besides the hobby-horse? Have I borrowed the forehorse bells, his plumes

and braveries, nay had his mane new shorne and frizl'd, and shall the major put me besides the hobby-horse?"

Whoever happens to recollect the manner in which Mr. Bayes's troops in the *Rehearsal* are exhibited on the stage, will have a tolerably correct notion of a morris hobby-horse. Additional remains of the Pyrrhic or sword dance are preserved in the daggers stuck in the man's cheeks, which constituted one of the hocus-pocus or legerdemain tricks practised by this character, among which were the threading of a needle, and the transferring of an egg from one hand to the other, called by Ben Jonson *the travels of the egg.** To the horse's mouth was suspended a ladle for the purpose of gathering money from the spectators. In later times the fool appears to have performed this office, as may be collected from Nashe's play of *Summer's last will and testament*, where this stage direction occurs, "Ver goes in and fetcheth out the Hobby-horse and the morris daunce who daunce about." Ver then says, "About, about, lively, put your horse to it, reyne him harder, jerke him with your wand, sit fast, sit fast, man; *foole, holde up your ladle there.*" Will Summers is made to say, "You friend with the hobby-horse, goe not too fast, for feare of wearing out my lord's tyle-stones with your hob-nayles." Afterwards there enter three clowns and three maids, who dance the morris, and at the same time sing the following song:—

"Trip and goe, heave and hoe,
Up and downe, to and fro,
From the towne, to the grove,
Two and two, let us rove,
A Maying, a playing;
Love hath no gainsaying:
So merrily trip and goe."

Lord Orford, in his catalogue of English Engravers, under the article of Peter Stent, has described two paintings at Lord Fitzwilliam's, on Richmond Green, which came out of the old

* "Every man out of his humour," Act ii. Sc. 1.

neighbouring palace. They were executed by Vinckenboom, about the end of the reign of James I, and exhibit views of the above palace; in one of these pictures a Morris Dance is introduced, consisting of seven figures, viz. a fool, a Hobby-horse, a piper, a Maid Marian, and three other dancers, the rest of the figures being spectators. Of these, the first four and one of the dancers are reduced in the annexed plate from a tracing made by the late Captain Grose. The fool has an inflated bladder, or eel-skin, with a ladle at the end of it, and with this he is collecting money. The piper is pretty much in his original state; but the hobby-horse wants the legerdemain apparatus, and Maid Marian is not remarkable for the elegance of her person.

Dr. Plott, in his *History of Staffordshire*, p. 434, mentions that within memory, at Abbot's or Paget's Bromley, they had a sort of sport which they celebrated at Christmas, or on new year and twelfth days, called the *Hobby-horse dance*, from a person who carried the image of a horse between his legs made of thin boards, and in his hand a bow and arrow. The latter passing through a hole in the bow, and stopping on a shoulder, made a snapping noise when drawn to and fro, keeping time with the music. With this man danced six others, carrying on their shoulders as many rein deer heads, with the arms of the chief families to whom the revenues of the town belonged. They danced the heys and other country dances. To the above hobby-horse dance there belonged a pot, which was kept by turns by the reeves of the town, who provided cakes and ale to put into this pot; all people who had any kindness for the good intent of the institution of the sport giving pence a piece for themselves and families. Foreigners also that came to see it contributed; and the money, after defraying the expense of the cakes and ale, went to repair the church and support the poor: which charges, adds the doctor, are not now perhaps so cheerfully borne.

A short time before the Revolution in France, the May Games and Morris Dance were celebrated in many parts of that country, accompanied by a fool and a *Hobby-horse*. The latter

was termed *un chevalet;* and, if the authority of Minshew be not questionable, the Spaniards had the same character under the name of *tarasca.**

VIII. THE DRAGON. The earliest mention of him as a part of the morris dance we have already seen in the extract from Stubbes's *Anatomie of abuses;* and he is likewise introduced in a morris, in Sampson's play of the *Vowbreaker, or fayre maid of Clifton*, 1633, where a fellow says, "I'll be a *fiery dragon:*" on which, another, who had undertaken the hobby-horse, observes that he will be "a thund'ring *Saint George* as ever rode on horseback." This seems to afford a clue to the use of this dragon, who was probably attacked in some ludicrous manner by the hobby-horse saint, and may perhaps be the *Devil* alluded to in the extract already given from Fetherstone's *Dialogue against dancing.*

IX. THE MORRIS DANCERS. By these are meant the common dancers in the late morrises, and who were not distinguished by any particular appellation, though in earlier times it is probable that each individual had his separate title. If there were any reason for a contrary opinion, it might depend on the costume of numbers 10 and 11 in Mr. Tollett's window, which may perhaps belong to the present class. There are likewise two similar figures in the Flemish print; and the coincidence in their attitudes is no less remarkable than it is in those of some of the other characters. The circumstance too of one only wearing a feather in his hat is deserving of notice, as it is the same in both the representations. The streamers which proceed from their sleeves and flutter in the wind, though continued in very modern times, were anciently not peculiar to morris dancers, examples of them occurring in many old prints.† In the reign of Henry the Eighth the morris dancers were dressed in gilt leather and silver paper, and sometimes in coats of white spangled fustian. They had purses at their

* "Spanish Dictionary."

† See the plate of ancient cards, xxxi. in Strutt's "Sports and Pastimes," where a *knave* or attendant is dressed in this manner.

girdles, and garters to which bells were attached.* The latter have been always a part of the furniture of the more active characters in the morris, and the use of them is of great antiquity. The *tinkling ornaments of the feet* among the Jewish women are reprobated in *Isaiah* iii. 16. 18. Gratius Faliscus, who wrote his poem on hunting in the time of Augustus, has alluded to the practice of dancing with bells on the feet among the Egyptian priests of Canopus, in the following lines:

"Vix operata suo sacra ad Bubastia lino
Velatur *sonipes æstivi turba Canopi.*"—*Cynegeticon*, lib. i. 42.

There is good reason for believing that the morris bells were borrowed from the genuine *Moorish dance;* a circumstance that tends to corroborate the opinion that has been already offered with respect to the etymology of the *morris.* Among the beautiful habits of various nations, published by Hans Weigel at Nuremberg, in 1577, there is the figure of an African lady of the kingdom of Fez in the act of dancing, with bells at her feet. A copy of it is here exhibited.

* Lysons's "Environs of London," i. p. 227, 228.

The number of bells round each leg of the morris dancers amounted from twenty to forty.* They had various appellations, as the fore-bell, the second bell, the treble, the tenor, the bass, and the double bell. Sometimes they used trebles only; but these refinements were of later times.† The bells were occasionally jingled by the hands, or placed on the arms or wrists of the parties.

[The cut beneath is curious, inasmuch as it shews how the fondness for the handkerchief, among the morris dancers, in the middle of the seventeenth century, had superseded the use of *bells*, and other ornaments for the hand. The verses beneath give us a lively description of the personal appearance of this important character. The cut is copied from Dr. Dibdin's edition of More's Utopia, vol. ii. p. 266.

With a noyse and a din,
Comes the *Maurice Dancer* in:
With a fine linnen shirt, but a buckram skin.
Oh! he treads out such a peale,
From his paire of legs of veale,
The quarters are idols to him:
Nor do those knaves inviron
Their toes with so much iron,
'Twill ruin a smith to shoe him.

* Stubbes's "Anatomie of abuses," ubi supra.
† See Rowley's "Witch of Edmonton," 1658, Act i. Sc. 2.

Ay, and then he flings about,
His sweat and his clout,
The wiser think it two ells;
While the yeomen find it meet,
That he jangle at his feet,
The fore-horses right care jewels.*—*Editor.*]

Scarves, ribbands, and laces hung all over with gold rings, and even precious stones, are also mentioned in the time of Elizabeth.† The miller, in the play of the *Vowbreaker*, says he is come to borrow "a few ribbandes, bracelets, carerings, wyertyers, and silke girdles and handkerchers for a morice and a show before the queene." The handkerchiefs, or napkins‡ as they are sometimes called, were held in the hand, or tied to the shoulders.§ In Shirley's *Lady of Pleasure*, 1637, Act i., Aretina thus inveighs against the amusements of the country:

* "Recreation for ingenious Head Pieces, &c." edit. 1667, 12mo. —*Note by Editor.*

† Stubbes, ubi supra. "Knight of the burning Pestle," Act iv.

‡ Stubbes, ubi supra. Jonson's "Masque of Gipsies." Holme's "Academy of armory," book iii. p. 169, whence the following cut has been borrowed, which, rude as it is, may serve to convey some idea of the manner in which the handkerchiefs were used.

§ "Knight of the burning Pestle," Act iv.

" ———— to observe with what solemnity
They keep their wakes, and throw for pewter candlestickes,
How they become the morris, with whose bells
They ring all into Whitson ales, and sweate
Through twenty scarffes and napkins, till the Hobby-horse
Tire, and the maide Marian dissolv'd to a gelly,
Be kept for spoone meate."

The early use of the feather in the hat appears both in Mr. Tollett's window and the Flemish print; a fashion that was continued a long time afterwards.* Sometimes the hat was decorated with a nosegay,† or with the herb *thrift*, formerly called *our lady's cushion*.‡

Enough has been said to show that the collective number of the morris dancers has continually varied according to circumstances, in the same manner as did their habits. In Israel's print they are nine; in Mr. Tollett's window, eleven. Mr. Strutt has observed that on his sixteenth plate there are only five, exclusive of the two musicians; but it is conceived that what he refers to is not a morris, but a dance of fools. There is a pamphlet entitled, *Old Meg of Herefordshire for a Mayd Marian and Hereford town for a morris dance, or twelve morris dancers in Herefordshire* 1200 *years old*, 1609, 4to.§ In the painting by Vinckenboom,* at Richmond, there are seven figures. In Blount's *Glossographia*, 1656, the *Morisco* is defined, "a dance wherein there were usually five men and a boy

* "Vox graculi," 1623, p. 49.

† Fletcher's "Women pleased," Act iv.

‡ Greene's "Quip for an upstart Courtier," sign. B. 2.

§ This tract is mentioned by Sir William Temple, in his Essay on health and long life, from the communication of Lord Leicester. Howel, in his "Parley of Beasts," 1660, has recorded that "of late years ther were call'd out within three miles compasse ten men that were a thousand years between them, one supplying what the other wanted of a hundred years apiece, and they danc'd the *morris* divers hours together in the market place with a taborer before them 103 years old, and a maid *Mariam* 105," p. 122. This seems to allude to the same event.

dressed in a girles habit, whom they called Maid Marrian." The morris in Fletcher's *Two noble Kinsmen* contains some characters, which, as they are no where else to be found, might have been the poet's own invention, and designed for stage effect:

> "The chambermaid, and serving man by night
> That seek out silent hanging: then mine host
> And his fat spouse, that welcomes to their cost
> The gauled traveller, and with a beckning
> Informs the tapster to inflame the reck'ning.
> Then the beast-eating clown, and next the fool,
> The *Bavian*, with long tail and eke long tool,
> *Cum multis aliis*, that make a dance."

Mr. Ritson has taken notice of an old wooden cut "preserved on the title of a penny-history, *(Adam Bell, &c.)* printed at Newcastle in 1772," and which represents, in his opinion, a

morris dance consisting of the following personages: 1. A bishop. 2. Robin Hood. 3. The potter or beggar. 4. Little John. 5. Friar Tuck. 6. Maid Marian. He remarks that

the execution of the whole is too rude to merit a copy; a position that is not meant to be controverted; but it is necessary to introduce the cut in this place for the purpose of correcting an error into which the above ingenious writer has inadvertently fallen. It is proper to mention that it originally appeared on the title page to the first *known* edition of *Robin Hood's garland*, printed in 1670, 18mo.

Now this cut is certainly *not* the representation of a morris dance, but merely of the principal characters belonging to the garland. These are, Robin Hood, Little John, *queen Catherine*, the bishop, the *curtal frier*, (not Tuck), and the beggar. Even though it were admitted that Maid Marian and Friar Tuck were intended to be given, it could not be maintained that either the bishop or the beggar made part of a morris.

There still remain some characters in Mr. Tollett's window, of which no description can be here attempted, viz. Nos. 1, 4, 6, and 7. As these are also found in the Flemish print* they cannot possibly belong to Robin Hood's company; and therefore their learned proprietor would, doubtless, have seen the necessity of re-considering his explanations.† The resemblance between the two ancient representations is sufficiently remarkable to warrant a conjecture that the window has been originally executed by some foreign artist; and that the panes with the English friar, the hobby-horse, and the may-pole, have been since added.

Mr. Waldron has informed us that he saw in the summer of 1783, at Richmond in Surrey, a troop of morris dancers from Abingdon, accompanied by a fool in a motley jacket, who carried in his hand a staff about two feet long, with a blown

* Compare No. 1, with the left hand figure at bottom in the print; No. 4, with the left hand figure at top; No. 6, with the right hand figure at bottom; and No. 7, with the right hand figure at top. This last character in the Flemish print has a flower in his hat as well as No. 4. Query if that ornament have been accidentally omitted by the *English Engraver?*

† This gentleman's death is recorded to have happened Oct. 22d. 1779. Gough's "Brit. topogr." ii. 239.

bladder at the end of it, with which he either buffeted the crowd to keep them at a proper distance from the dancers, or played tricks for the diversion of the spectators. The dancers and the fool were Berkshire husbandmen taking an annual circuit to collect money.* Mr. Ritson too has noticed that morris dancers are yet annually seen in Norfolk, and make their constant appearance in Lancashire. He has also preserved a newspaper article respecting some morris dancers of Pendleton, who paid their annual visit to Salford, in 1792;† and a very few years since another company of this kind was seen at Usk in Monmouthshire, which was attended by a boy Maid Marian, a hobby-horse, and a fool. They professed to have kept up the ceremony at that place for the last three hundred years. It has been thought worth while to record these modern instances, because it is extremely probable that from the present rage for refinement and innovation, there will remain, in the course of a short time, but few vestiges of our popular customs and antiquities.

* See his continuation to Ben Jonson's "Sad Shepherd," 1782, 8vo, p. 255, a work of very considerable merit, and which will materially diminish the regret of all readers of taste that the original was left unfinished.

† "Robin Hood," i. cviii.

A very few years since, the editor witnessed a numerous retinue of Morris Dancers, remarkably well habited, skilfully performing their evolutions to the tune of a tabor and pipe, in the streets of Oxford University; and he is credibly informed that at Chipping Norton, and other towns in Oxfordshire, a band of dancers traverse the neighbourhood for many days at Whitsuntide. At Droitwich, also, in Worcestershire, on the 27th of June, a large party of Morris Dancers still continue to parade the town and neighbourhood, it is said, in commemoration of a discovery of some extensive salt mines.

THE

LAMENT OF SIMON DE MONTFORT.

ACCORDING to promise, in page 126, the editor here introduces the "Lament of Simon de Montfort," in the Anglo-Norman French of the day, together with Sir Walter Scott's translation.

"This version," Mr. Park says, "was made at the desire of Mr. Ritson, for a projected reprint of his *Ancient Songs, from the Time of Henry III to the Revolution;* the new materials for which all perished, except this relique, which its esteemed translator has permitted in the most friendly, and, therefore, flattering manner, to appear in the present publication. The Norman-French original, which ought to have accompanied this ballad, cannot now be retraced."—Second edition of *Ritson's English Songs*, published by Park, 1813, v. ii, p. 380.

There are now, however, several versions in print. One appears in the second edition of the *Songs and Ballads*, published by Mr. Ritson's nephew, in two vols., 8vo., 1829, to which is appended Mr. Ellis's translation. The present original version the editor, on account of its accuracy, has preferred reprinting from that published by Thomas Wright, Esq., for the Camden Society, in his volume of the *Political Songs of England*, 4to., 1839; and he is pleased in thus being able to present to his readers the rival translations of two such eminent poets as Mr. Ellis and Sir Walter Scott. Mr. Wright, too, has given a literal prose translation in his volume.

THE LAMENT OF SIMON DE MONTFORT.

MS Harl. 2253, fol. ro. early in the fourteenth century.

CHAUNTNER m'estoit, mon cuer le voit, en un dure langage,
Tut en ploraunt fust fet le chaunt de nostre duz baronage,
Que pur la pees, si loynz après se lesserent detrere,
Lur cors trencher, e demembrer, pur salver Engleterre.
Ore est ocys la flur de pris, que taunt savoit de guere,
Ly quens Montfort, sa dure mort molt enplorra la terre.

Si com je qui, par un mardi, firent la bataile,
Tot à cheval, fust le mal, sauntz nulle pedaile ;
Tresmalement y ferirent de le espie forbie,
Qe la part sire Edward conquist la mestrie.
Ore est ocys, etc.

Mès par sa mort, le cuens Mountfort conquist la victorie,
Come ly martyr de Caunterbyr, finist sa vie ;
Ne voleit pas li bon Thomas qe perist seinte Eglise,
Ly cuens auxi se combati, e morust sauntz feyntise.
Ore est ocys, etc.

Sire Heu le fer, ly Despencer, tresnoble justice,
Ore est à tort lyvré, à mort, à trop male guise.
Sire Henri, pur veir le dy, fitz le cuens de Leycestre,
Autres assez, come vous orrez, par le cuens de Gloucestre.
Ore est ocys, etc.

Qe voleint moryr, e mentenir la pees e la dreyture,
Le Seint Martir lur fra joyr sa conscience pure,
Qe velt moryr e sustenir les hommes de la terre,
Son bon desir accomplir, quar bien le quidem fere.
Ore est, etc.

Près de sons cors, le bon tresors, un heyre troverent,
Les faus ribaus, tant furent maus, e ceux qe le tuerent ;
Molt fust pyr, que demenbryr, firent le prodhonme,
Qe de guerrer e fei tener si bien savoit la sonme.
Ore est, etc.

Priez touz, mes amis douz, le fitz Seinte Marie
Qe l'enfant, tres puissant, meigne en bone vie ;
Ne vueil nomer li escolor, ne vueil qe l'em die,
Mès pur l'amour le salveour, priez pur la clergie.
Ore est, etc.

Ne say trover rien qu'il firent bien, ne baroun ne counte,
Les chivalers e esquiers touz sunt mys à hounte,
Pur lur lealté e verité, que tut est anëntie ;
Le losenger purra reigner, le fol pur sa folie.
Ore est, etc,

Sire Simoun, ly prodhom, e sa compagnie
En joie vont en ciêl amount, en pardurable vie
Mès Jhesu Crist, qe en croyz se mist, Dieu en prenge cure,
Qe sunt remis, e detenuz en prisone dure.
Ore est ocys, etc.

TRANSLATION BY SIR WALTER SCOTT.

In woeful wise my song shall rise,
My heart impells the strain ;
Tears fit the song, which tells the wrong
Of gentle barons slayn.

CHORUS.

Now lowly lies the flower of pries,*
That could so much of weir ;†
Fayr peace to gaine they fought in vayn,
Their house to ruin gave,
And limb and life to butcheryng knyfe,
Our native land to save.
Erle Montfort's scathe, and heavy death,
Shall cost the world a tear.

* Price. † War.

As I here say, upon Tuesdaye
The battle bold was done;
Each mounted knight there fell in fight,
For ayd of foot was none.
Their wounds were felt, and blows were dealt,
With brands that burnish'd be;
Sir Edward stoute, his numerous route,
Have won the masterie.
Now lowly lies, &c.

But though he died, on Montfort's side,
The victorye remain'd;
Like Becket's fayth, the Erle's in deathe
The martyr's palm obtained;
That holy saint would never graunt
The Church should fall or slyde;
Like him, the Erle met deadly peril,
And like him dauntless died.
Now lowly lies, &c.

The bold Sir Hugh Despencer true,
The kingdom's Justice he,
Was doom'd to die, unrighteouslye,
By passing crueltie;
And Sir Henry, the son was he
To Leister's nobile lord,
With many moe, as ye shall know,
Fell by Erle Gloster's sword.
Now lowly lies, &c.

He that dares dye, in standing by
The country's peace and lawe,
To him the saint the meed shall graunt
Of conscience free from flawe;
Who suffers scathe, and faces death,
To save the poor from wrong;
God speed his end, the poor man's friend,
For such we pray and long.
Now lowly lies, &c.

His bosom nere, a treasure dere,
A sackcloth shirt they found,—
The felons there, full ruthless were,
Who stretched him on the grounde.
More wrongs than be in butcherye,
They did the knight who fell,
To wield his sword and keep his worde
Who knew the way so well.
Now lowly lies, &c.

Pray, as is meet, my brethren sweet,
The maiden Mary's son,
The infant fair, our noble heir,
In grace to guide him on.
I will not name the habit's claym,*
Of that I will not saye;
But for Jesus' love, that sits above,
For churchmen ever pray.
Now lowly lies, &c.

Seek not to see of chivalrye,
Or count, or baron bold;
Each gallant knight, and squire of might,
They all are bought and sold;
For loyaltie and veritie,
They now are done awaye;
The losel vile may reign by guile,
The fool by his foleye.
Now lowly lies, &c.

Sir Simon wight, that gallant knight,
And his companye eche one,
To heaven above, and joye and love,
And endless life are gone.

---

* The clerical habit is obviously alluded to; and it seems to be cautiously and obscurely hinted, that the Church was endangered by the defeat of De Montfort.—*Park.*

May he on rood, who bought our good,
And God their paine relieve,
Who captive ta'en, are kept in chaine,
And depe in dungeon grieve.

Now lowly lies the flower of pries,
That could so much of weir:
Erle Montfort's scathe, and heavy death,
Shall cost the world a tear.

Mr Park adds, in a note, that it was the object of the translator to imitate, as literally as possible, the style of the original, even in its rudeness, abrupt transitions, and obscurity; such being the particular request of Mr. Ritson, who supplied the old French model of this ballad minstrelsy.

The other ancient song, or ballad, to which allusion is made in the note, p. 126, and which is commented upon by Mr. Warton with his usual felicity, is the following. Mr. Warton adds, he had afterwards discovered that it had previously appeared in "Percy's Reliques of Ancient Poetry," from which work the editor has transcribed it, with the learned Bishop's apposite remarks. It is there entitled—

"Richard of Almaigne,

"A ballad made by one of the adherents to Simon de Montford, Earl of Leicester, soon after the battle of Lewes, which was fought May 14, 1264." It affords, the Bishop adds, a curious specimen of ancient satire; and shews that the liberty assumed by the good people of this realm, of abusing their kings and princes at pleasure, is a privilege of very long standing.

To render this antique libel intelligible, the reader is to understand, that just before the battle of Lewes, which proved so fatal to the interests of Henry III, the barons had offered his brother Richard, King of the Romans, £30,000, to procure a peace upon such terms as would have divested Henry of all his

regal power, and therefore the treaty proved abortive. The consequences of that battle are well known. The king, prince Edward his son, his brother Richard, and many of his friends, fell into the hands of their enemies, while two great barons of the king's party, John, Earl of Warren, and Hugh Bigot, the king's justiciary, had been glad to escape into France.

In the first stanza, the aforesaid sum of £30,000 is alluded to; but, with the usual misrepresentation of party malevolence, is asserted to have been the exorbitant demand of the king's brother.

With regard to the second stanza, the reader is to note, that Richard, along with the earldom of Cornwall, had the honors of *Wallingford* and Eyre confirmed to him on his marriage with Sanchia, daughter of the Count of Provence, in 1243. Windsor Castle was the chief fortress belonging to the king, and had been garrisoned by foreigners,—a circumstance which furnishes out the burden of each stanza.

The third stanza alludes to a remarkable circumstance which happened on the day of the battle of Lewes. After the battle was lost, Richard, King of the Romans, took refuge in a windmill, which he barricadoed, and maintained for some time, against the barons, but in the evening was obliged to surrender. See a very full account of this in the Chronicle of Mailross, Oxon, 1684, p. 229.

The fourth stanza is of obvious interpretation. Richard, who had been elected King of the Romans in 1256, and had afterwards gone over to take possession of his dignity, was in the year 1259 about to return into England, when the barons raised a popular clamor, that he was bringing with him foreigners to overrun the kingdom. Upon which he was forced to dismiss almost all his followers, otherwise the barons would have opposed his landing.

In the fifth stanza, the writer regrets the escape of the Earl of Warren; and in the sixth and seventh stanzas insinuates, that if he and Sir Hugh Bigot once fell into the hands of their adversaries, they should never more return home; a circumstance which fixes the date of this ballad; for, in the year 1265,

both these noblemen landed in South Wales, and the royal party soon after gained the ascendant. See Holinshed, Rapin, &c.

The ballad is copied from a very ancient MS. in the British Museum (Harl. MSS. 2253, fol. 58v°. of the reign of Edward II.) This MS. is judged, from the peculiarities of the writing, to be not later than the time of Richard II, *th* being everywhere expressed by the letter þ; the ẏ is pointed after the Saxon manner, and the ɨ hath an oblique stroke over it.—

SONG AGAINST THE KING OF ALMAIGNE.

Sitteth alle stille, ant herkneth to me;
The kyng of Alemaigne, by mi leaute,
Thritty thousent pound askede he,
For te make the pees in the countre,
Ant so he dude more.
Richard, thoh thou be ever trichard,
Trichen shalt thou never more.

Richard of Alemaigne whil that he wes kyng,
He spend al is tresour upon swyvying,
Haveth he nout of Walingford o ferlyng,
Let him habbe, ase he brew, bale to dring.
Maugre Wyndesore.
Richard, thah thou be ever, &c.

The kyng of Alemaigne wend do ful wel,
He saisede the mulne for a castel,
With hare sharpe swerdes he ground the stel,
He wende that the sayles were mangonel
To helpe Wyndesore.
Richard, thoh thou be ever, &c.

The kyng of Alemaigne gederede ys host,
Makede him a castel of a mulne post,

Wende with is pride, ant is muchele bost,
Brohte from Alemaigne mony sori gost,
To store Wyndesore.
Richard, thoh thou be ever, &c.

By the God that is aboven ous, he dude much synne,
That lette passen over see the erl of Warynne:
He hath robbed Engelond, the mores, ant the fenne,
The gold, ant the selver, and y-boren henne,
For love of Wyndesore.
Richard, thoh thou be ever, &c.

Sire Simond de Mountfort hath swore bi ys chyn,
Hevede he nou here the erle of Waryn,
Shuld he never more come to is yn,
Ne with sheld, ne with spere, ne with other gyn,
To help of Wyndesore.
Richard, thoh thou be ever, &c.

Sire Simon de Montfort hath swore bi ys cop,
Hevede he nou here Sir Hue de Bigot,
Al he shulde grante here twelfmoneth scot,
Shulde he never more with his fot pot
To helpe Wyndersore.
Richard, thah thou be ever, &c.

Be the leuf, be the lobt, sire Edward,
Thou shalt ride sporeles o thy lyard,
Al the ryghte way to Dovere ward,
Shalt thou never more breke fore-ward;
Ant that reweth sore;
Edward, thou dudst us a shreward,
Forsoke thyn emes lore.
Richard, thah thou be ever, &c.

This ballad will rise in importance with the reader, when he finds, that it is even believed to have occasioned a Law in our

Statute Book, viz., "against slanderous reports or tales, to cause discord betwixt king and people."—(Westm. Primer, c. xxxiv. anno 3, Edw. I). That it had this effect is the opinion of an eminent writer. See "Observations upon the Statutes, &c.," 4to. edit., 1766, p. 71.

However, in the Harl. Collection may be found other satirical and defamatory rhymes of the same age, that might have their share in contributing to this first law against libels.

Bishop Percy conferred upon literature an inestimable benefit. He dug up many precious relics from among the ruins of time. He excited the interest of the poet, and of the historian, and united in friendly league criticism and antiquarian science. It was Dr. Percy, speedily followed by Mr. Warton and Mr. Ritson, who no doubt instigated examination into the records mouldering in our various public and private repositories, for the poetical ballads, legends, and mysteries of former days; created that taste and indefatigable spirit of enquiry which, during the last twenty years, has particularly distinguished the present age; and from whence has originated the formation of the Camden, the Percy, the Shakspere, and other Societies in England, and the Bannatyne Club in Scotland; the members of which, by their curious and valuable publications, have put the public in possession of many hidden treasures, which have so materially tended to elucidate the manners and customs, the history, and lives, of our earliest ancestors.

One of these publications, consisting of materials of the same stamp and character as the two preceding ballads or songs, is "The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II," printed for the Camden Society, and edited by Mr. Wright, amongst the most erudite of our modern antiquaries, and particularly well acquainted with our early Latin and Anglo-Norman languages.

A short extract from Mr. Wright's Preface to the above volume admirably illustrates the value and importance of the species of literature which we are now considering:—

"Few historical documents are more interesting and important than the contemporary songs in which the political partisan

satirized his opponents, and stirred up the courage of his friends, or in which the people exulted over victories gained abroad against their enemies, or at home against their oppressors; or lamented over evil counsels, and national calamities. Yet, though a few specimens have been published from time to time, in collections of miscellaneous poetry, such as those of Percy and Ritson, and have never failed to attract attention, no book specially devoted to ancient political songs has yet appeared.

"The quantity of such productions has generally varied with the character of the age. They were frequent from a very early period in other countries of Europe, as well as England. It would be easy to produce proofs that in our island they were very numerous in Saxon times,—a few specimens, indeed, have escaped that destruction which visits the monuments of popular and temporary feeling before all others; and for years after the Norman conquest the oppressed people continued to sing the songs of former days at their rustic festivals, or amid their every-day labours. As the feelings which caused them to be remembered died away gradually before the weight of a new political system, a new class of songs also arose. From the Conquest, to the end of the twelfth century, the political songs of the Anglo-Normans were in a great measure confined, as far as we can judge from the few specimens that are left, to laudatory poems in Latin, or to funereal elegies on princes and great people. Yet we can hardly doubt, that with the turbulent barons of those troublous times, the harp of the minstrel must have resounded frequently to subjects of greater present excitement.

"With the beginning of the thirteenth century, opened a new scene of political contention. It is amid the civil commotions of the reign of John that, our manuscripts first present traces of the songs in which popular opinion sought and found a vent, at the same time that the commons of England began to assume a more active part on the stage of history. The following reign was a period of active excitement. The weak government of Henry III permitted every party to give free utterance to their opinions and intentions, and the songs of

this period are remarkably bold and pointed. These effusions are interesting in other points of view besides their connexion with historical events; they illustrate, in a remarkable manner, the history of our language; they shew us how Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English, were successively the favourite instruments by which the thoughts of our ancestors were expressed; and, collaterally, they shew us how the clerk (or scholar) with his Latin; the courtier, with his Anglo-Norman; and the people, with their good old English, came forward in turns upon the scene. In our songs we see that, during the early part of the reign of the Third Henry, the satirical pieces which inveighed against the corruptions of the State, and demanded so loudly their amendment, are all in Latin, which is as much as to say, that they came from the scholastic part of the people, or those who had been bred in the Universities,—then no small or unimportant part of the community. They seem to have led the way as bold reformers; and the refectory of the monastery, not less than the baronial hall, rang frequently with the outbursts of popular feeling. The remarkable and highly-interesting declaration of the objects and sentiments of the barons, which was published after the battle of Lewes, is written in Latin. Amid the barons' wars was composed the first political song in English that has yet been found. It is remarkable, that all the songs of this period which we know, whether in Latin, Anglo-Norman, or English, are on the popular side of the dispute,—all, with one accord, agree in the praise and support of the great Simon de Montfort.

The following are the titles of several of these political songs which Mr. Wright has collected, which indicate the freedom and boldness of the satire with which they abound:—"Song against the Avarice of the Bishops"; "A Song on the Times"; a bitter satire on the vices of the great; "Against the Pride of the Ladies," directed against the gay fashion in ladies' clothing which was then prevalent, and seems even to have been aped by the middle and lower classes; "Satire on the Consistory Courts"; a satire against the smaller Ecclesiastical Courts, which seem then, as well as now, to have been vexatious and

unpopular; "Song against the King's Taxes"; "Song on the Venality of the Judges" gives a strong picture of the extortions committed, at this period of our history, upon the weak and defenceless, by the magistrates and the officers connected with the courts of law; "A Song against the Retinues of the Great People"; a satire upon the numerous retinues of the nobles and rich people, whose idle attendants and servants preyed upon the produce of the industrious peasantry.

It is to be hoped, that Mr. Wright will fulfil the intention expressed in his preface, of publishing a second volume of these valuable and entertaining songs, the contents of which he has not only made clear and popular by his translations, but by his comments has illustrated many transactions before unknown, or little understood, in the history of our country.

LIFE OF ROBIN HOOD.

[This enlarged edition of Robin Hood's Biography, Garlands, Ballads, &c., could not be considered complete had the insertion of the following transcript of the earliest life of him, hitherto discovered in manuscript, been omitted. It is contained in the Sloane MS., No. 715, printed by Mr. Thoms in his "Prose Romances," and occurs in a small quarto volume of miscellaneous tracts, consisting of 189 leaves; the Life commencing on fol. 157, and occupying five pages and a half. It is written in a small, close, running, hand, with many abbreviations; and is by no means clearly to be deciphered, having very much the look of Arabic at a short distance. The rest of the volume is filled with matters of a totally different kind, so that a Life of Robin Hood seems to be here singularly out of place, and might easily be overlooked in the midst of such uncongenial writings. It commences with receipts for "the sublimation of mettalls by mettalls," followed by "a small booke of Astophius, called the great Key of Wisdom"; then come some very abstruse speculations on the soul, after which appears a large body of receipts in cookery, and domestic medicine; a long, imperfect, moral poem, followed by another in the same hand-writing, entitled "Synne and shame detested and digested, by Tho. Simson"; then comes "the Life of Robin Hood"; the volume concluding with a description of the Astrolabe, a treatise "De vitâ et morte," and "Theophilus Monachus de diversis artibus," copied by Humphery Wanley, in 1669, from a MS. in the Public Library, Cambridge. The handwriting of all these tracts is very varied, and of different ages; that of the MS. Life of Robin Hood being the most peculiar.]

Robin Hood was borne at Lockesley, in Yorkeshire, or after others, in Notinghamshire, in the dayes of Henry the Second, about the yeare 1160; but lyued tyll the latter end of Richard

the Fyrst. He was of wo[l].* parentage, but so ryotous, that he lost or sould his patrimony, and for debt became an outlawe; then ioyning to him many stout fellowes of like disposicioun, amongst whome one called Little John was principal, or next to him. They haunted about Barnsdale forrest,† Clomptoun parke, and such other places. They vsed most of al shooting, wherin they excelled all the men of the land, though, as occation required, they had al so other weapons. One of his first exployts was the goyng abrode into a forrest, and bearing with him a bowe of exceeding great strength. He fell into company with certayne rangers, or woodmen, who fell to quarrel with him, as making showe to vse such a bowe as no man was able to shoote with all; whereto Robin replyed, that he had two better then that at Lockesley, only he bare thot with him nowe as a byrding bowe. At length the contentioun‡ grewe so hote, that there was a wager layd about the kylling of a deere a great distance of; for performance wherof, Robin offred to lay his head to a certayne soume of money. Of the advantage of which rash speach, the others presently tooke. So the marke being found out, one of them, they were both to make his hart faynt, and hand vnsteady, as he was about to shoote, urged him with the losse of his head if he myst the marke. Notwithstanding, Robin kyld the deare, and gaue every man his money agayne, saue to him which at the poynt of shooting so vpbrayded him with danger to loose his hed. For that money, he sayd, they would drinke together, and herevpon the other stomached the matter; and from quarelling they grewe to fighting with him. But Robin, getting him somewhat off with shooting, dispact them, and so fled away; and then betaking him selfe to liue in the woods by such booty as he could get, his company encreast to an hundred and a halfe; and in those dayes, whether they were

* Ritson says, "Though the material word is illegible, the sense evidently requires *noble*."

† Qy.—Plompton park, in Cumberland, formerly very large, and set apart for keeping of the King's deer.

‡ See MS. for "contention."

favord, or how so ever, they were counted invincible. Where-soever he hard of any that were of vnvsual strength and hardynes, he would disgyse him selfe, and rather than fayle go lyke a beggar, to become acqueynted with them; and after he had tryed them with fighting, never giue them over tyl he had vsed means to drawe them to lyve after his fashion. After such manner he procured the pynder of Wakefeyld to become one of his company, and a freyer, called Muchel, though some say he was an other kynd of religious man, for that the order of freyrs was not yet sprung up; Scarlock, he induced, upon this occacion: one day meting him, as he walked solitary, and lyke to a man forlorne, because a mayd to whom he was affyanced was taken from by the violence of her friends, and giuen to another that was auld and welthy. Whervpon Robin, vnderstanding when the maryage-day should be, came to the church, as a beggar, and having his company not far of, which came in so sone as they hard the sound of his horne, he, toking the bryde perforce from him that was in hand to have maryed her, and caused the preist to wed her and Scarlocke together. Amongst other that greatly friended him, was Sir Richard Lee, a knight of Lancashire, lord of . . rso . . castle; and that first vpon this occation, it was the manner of Robin and his retinue to lyue by theiving and robbing, though yet he were somewhat religiously affected, and not without superstition. But of al seynts, he most honored the Virgin Mary; so that if any, for her sake, asked ought of him, he wold perform it, if possibly he could; neither would he suffer any that belonged vnto him to violate women, poremen, or any of the husbandry. Al theyr attempts were chiefly against fat prelates and religious persons, and howses fryres; and he is commended of John Mayor for the prince of al theyues and robbers, &c. Nowe, once it hapened him to send litfle John Scarlock and Muchel to the sayles vpon Watling streete, to meete with some booty they wanted, when any prey came to theyr hands to leade them into the wood to their habitacion, as if they would vse some hospitality; but after they had eate, would make them pay deerely for theyr cates, by stripping them of such things as they had. So they

dealt with Sir Richard Lee, leading to their manor, who made him the best cheare they had; and when Sir Richard would have departed only with giving the thanks, Robin tould him it was not his manner to dyne any where but he payd for such things as he tooke, and so should others do to him ere they parted, and it were, as he sayd, no good manners to refuse such doing. The knight tould him he had but xs., which he ment should have borne his charges at Blyth, or Doncastre; and if he had none, it fared ful yl with him at the tyme to parte from it, onely he promised, as he should be able, to requite his curtesy with the lyke. But Robin, not so contented, caused him to be searcht, and found no more but what the knight had told him of; wherevpon he commended his true dealing, and enquired further touching the cause of his sadness and bareness. The knight tould him then of his state and ancestry, and how his sonne and hayre, falling at varinge with a knight in Lancashire, slewe him in the feild, for which, and some other such lyke exployts, being in danger to loose his lyfe, the knight, to procure his deliverance, had been at great charges, and even lastly dryven to pawn his castle and lyving to the abbot of St. Maryes, at Yorke, for 400lj; and the cheife justice so dealt with the abbot for his state, or interest therein, that being lyke to forfeyt his lyving for lacke of money to redeeme it at the day appointed, he despayred now of al recovery. Robin then, pittying his case, gave him 400lj, which was parte of such bootyes as they had gorged, and suerty for payment againe within a tweluemont was our Lady. They also furnysht him with apparel, out of which he was worne quyte, and therfore, for very shamement, shortly to have past over the seas, and to spend the rest of his lyfe, as a mournful pylgrime, in going to Jerusalem, &c.; but being now enlightned, he despayred iust as his day appoynted to ye abbot, which where the cheife in shire conversed, accounting al the knights lands saued to themselues; and the knight, to try theyr charity, made shewe as if he wanted money to pay the debt, and when he found no token of compassion, left them the money and recovered his land, for which that payment were made he offred to ferme (farm) the abbot there-

by. Now, ere the twelvemonth was expyred, Sir Richard provided the 400lj, and a hundred shefe of good arrowes, which he ment to bestowe on Robin Hood; and encountring on the way certayne people that were wrastling for a great wager, he stood still to see the event of the matter. So there was a yeman that prevayled, but the other people enuying it, and the rather because he was but pore and alone, accorded among them...to oppress him with wrongs; that the knight took his parte, and rescued him, and at parting gaue him 5 marks. Nowe it befell, that neere to Nottingham al the cheifest archers had apoynted a day of shooting for some great wager, the Sherife him selfe being appoynted to see the game. Nowe that Sheriffe was a fel adversary to Robin and his company, and he againe of them no lesse maligned; therfore, to see into al matters, Little John was sent, in disguysed manner, to go shoote amongst them, where he sped him so wel, that the Shyryfe iudged him to be the best archer; and so importuned him to be his man, that Little John went home with him, vnder the name of Raynold Greenlefe, and telling him he was borne in Holderness. So Little John watched al advantages to do his master some myscheife; and, understanding where he used to go a hunting, by some means procured his master Robin Hood, and his retinue, to be in redynes ther about. So one day, the Shyryfe and al his people bin gone a hunting, Little John, of purpose, kept behinde, and lay a bed as somewhat sicke; but was no sooner gat vp enquired for his dynner of the steward, which, with curse words, denyed him victuals tyl his master were come home; wherevpon Little John beate him downe, and entred the buttry. The cook being a very stout fellowe, fought with him a long tyme, and at length accorded to goe with him to the forrest. So they two ryfled the howse, tooke away al the Shyryfe's treasure and best thinges, and conveyed it to Robin Hood; and then Little John repayred to the Shyryfe, who, in his hunting, doubted no such matter, but toke him for one of his company; wherevpon Little John tould him he had seen the goodlyest heard of deere that was in the forrest, not far of seven score in a company, which he could bring him to. The Sheryfe,

glad to heare of so strange a matter, went with him, tyl he came where the danger of Robin Hood and his company, who led him to their habitacion,.....and there serued him with his owne plate, and other thinges, that Little John and the cook had brought away. So that night they made him ly on the ground, after theyr owne manner, wrapt in a greene mantel, and the next day sent him away, after they had taken an oath of him never to pursue them, but the best he could to serue them; but the Shyriffe afterward made no more account of the othe then was meete yt. After this, Little John, Scarlocke, and others, were sent forth to meet with some company, if they were pore to helpe them with some such thinges as they had; if rytch, to handle them as they sawe occasion. So, vppon the way neare Barensdale, they met with 2 blacke monkes, wel horsed, and accompanyed with 50 persons. Nowe, because Robin, their master, had our Lady in great reverence, when any booty came to theyr hand, they would say our Lady sent them theyr; wherfore, when Little John sawe that company, he vsed such proverbe to his fellows, encoraging them to the encounter; and coming to the monkes, he tould them, that though they were but 3, they durst never see theyr master agayne, but if they brought them to dinner with him; and whom the monke keapt of, Little John beged to speake reprochfully for making his master stay dinner so long; whervpon, when the monkes enquired for his master's name, and Little John tould him it was Robin Hood, the monke angerly replyde, he was an arrant theif, of whom he never hard good; Little John replyed as contumeliously, saying, he was a yeoman of the forrest, and bad him to dynner; so the grewe from wordes to strokes, tyl they had kyled al but one or two, which they led, perforce, to theyr master, who saluted them lowely; but the monke, being stout-hearted, did not the lyke to his. Then Robin blewe his horn, and his retinue came in; they al went to dynner, and after that, Robin asked him of what abbey he was, who tould him he was of St. Mary. Now it was to the same to whose abbat the knight ought the 400lj which Robin lent him to redeeme his landes with, al which Robin perceyving, begone to

iest, that he marvayled our Lady had not sent him yet his pay which she was surety for betwixt a knight and him. Have no care, master, sayd Little John; you need not to say this monk hath brought it, I dare wel swere, for he is of her abbey. So Robin called for wyne, and drank to him, and prayed him to let him see if he had brought him the money. The monke swore he had never hard speach of such covenant before. But Robin bare him downe: he desembled, seing he knewe both Christ and his mother were so iust, and he confessing him selfe to be theyr every dayes servant and messenger, must needs have it, and therfore thanked him for coming so at his day. The monke stil denying, Robin asked howe much money he had about him; but twenty marks, sayd the monke. Then sayd Robin, if we fynd more, we will take it as of our Ladyes sending, but wil not of that which is thy owne spending money. So Little John was sent to search his bagges, and found about 800lj, which he related to his master, telling him with al, that our Lady had dobled his payment. Yea, I tould thee, monke, sayd Robin, what a trusty woman she is; so he called for wyne, and dranke to the monke, bidding him commend him to our Lady, and if she had need of Robin Hood, she would fynd him thankeful for so lib'ral dealing. Then they searcht the lode of another horse, wherfore the monke tould him, that was no curtesy to bid a man to dynner, and beate and bynd him; and it is our manner, sayd Robin, to leave but a litle behind, so the monke made hast to be gone, and sayd he might have dyned as good cheape at Blyth, or Doncastre. And Robin called to him as he was going, and bad him greete wel his abbot, and the rest of their convent, and wysh them to sende hym such a monke ech day to dynner. Then shortly came the knight to keepe his day; and after salutacions, was about to pay him his money, besyde xx marks for his curtsey; but Robin gave it him agayne, telling him howe our Lady had sent him, that, and more, by the abbey's cellerer, and it were to him a shame to be twyse payd; but the bowes and arrowes he accepted, for which he gave him at parting other 400lj. Nowe the Shyriffe of Nottingham, to drawe out Robin Hood, made to be proclaymed a day of shoot-

ing for the silver arrowe, wherto Robin boldely, with al his trayne, repayred, appoynting but 6 of his company to shooting with him, al the rest to stand apoynted to f . f . g . . . d* him; so Little John, Mychel, Scarlock, Gylbert, and Reynold, shot; but Robin won the prise from al, whervpon the Shyryfe and his company began to quarrel, and after, they came to fighting so long tyl Robin and his complices had destroyed the Sheryfe's trayne, for the most parte, in the conflyct. Little John was sore wounded with an arrow in the knee, and being not able to goe, requested his master to slay him, and not suffer him to come into the Sheryffe's handes. Robin avoucht he would not lose him for al England, wherfore Mychel was appoynted to beare him away on his back; and with much labor, and oft resting, he brought him to Sir Richard Lees castle, whether also, after the broyle, repayred Robin himself, and the rest of his company, where they were gladly receyved and defended against the Sheryffe, who presently raysed the country, and beseyged the castle, who vtterly refused to yield any there tyl he knewe the kyng mynd. Then the Shyriffe went to London, and enformed the kyng of al the matter, who dispatched the Shyryffe backe to levy a power of men in that country, telling him, that within a fortnight after, he him selfe would be at Nottingham to determyne of that matter. In the mean whyle, Little John being cured of his hurt, they al got them to the forest agayne. When the Shyriffe hard therof he was much agreyed, and sought by al means to app'hend Sir Richard Lee for defynding them, and watching his tyme at vnwares, he surprysed him, with a power of men, as he was at hawking, and went to put him in ward at Nottingham, and hang him; wherfore the knightes lady rode in al hast to Robin, and gaue him intelligence of her lordes distres, who, in al haste, pursued the Sheryfe, and overtaking him at Nottingham, with an arrowe slewe him, and..... if his head, enquyring what message he brought from the kyng, obiecting that breach of promise he had made to them in the

* Qy.—To safeguard him.

forest. Once after that they overthrewe the Sheryfe, returned and loosed the knyghte out of his bondes, and furnyshing him with weapons, tooke him with them to the forest, entending to vse what means they could to procure the kynge's pardon, who presently, herevpon, came to Nottingham with a great retinue, and vnderstanding of the matter, seysed the knyghte lyving into his hande; and surweying al the forrestes in Lancashire, he came to Ploutu parke, and fynding al the deare destroyd, he was marvaylous wroth, seeking about for Robin Hood, and making proclamation, that who so could bring him Sir Richard Lees head, should have all his land. So the kyng stayed about Nottingham halfe a yeare, and could not heare of Robin, tyl being advysed what a hard hand he bare against religious persons, he got him into a monke's weed, and with a smal company, went as a traveller on the way wher he thought Robin made abode, who espying them with their male horse, toke hold of the kynge's horse, making showe as he toke him for an abbot, and began to enquire after some spending; but the king excused the matter, telling him howe he had lyen at Nottingham, at great charges a fortnight, and had left him but 40lj. So Robin toke that, and having devyded it amongst his men, gave the kyng parte againe, who semed to take it in good parte, and then puld out the kyng's brode seale, and tould him howe the kyng did greet him wel, and charged him to come to Nottingham; whervpon Robin kneeled downe and thanked the abbot, for he pretended to thinke him none other, for bringing such a message from him that he loved most dearly of al men, and tould him, that for his labor he should go dyne with him; so being brought to the place of theyr abode, Robin blewe his horne, and al his company came, al a hoste obedyent to their master. The kyng marvayled, which Robin perceyving, dyd him selfe, with his best men, serue the kyng at meete, of welcoming him for the kyng's sake, as he sayd. Then he showed him the course of theyr lyues, and skyl in shooting, that he might enforme the kyng therof, and in shooting proposed this penalty to him that shot one of the garland, that the abbot should giue hym a good buffet, and for the nonce made him

selfe to forfayt; and when the abbot refused to stryke him, saying, it fel not for his order, but Robin would not cease tyl he made him smyte him soundly that he fel to the ground, for which Robin commended him; but Robin him selfe stroke his men as they fayled afterward. Robin discovered howe he perceyved it was the kyng, and to geyther with Sir Richard and his men, kneeled downe and asked forgiueness, which the kyng graunted upon condicoun he would be 'fore him at the court. So Robin arayed the kyng and his company in mantels of Lyncolne greene, and went with them to Nottingham, the kyng seeming also to be one of the outlawes, and the th...d the kyng for shooting togeyther for buffits. Robin oft boxt the king, and people suspecting they should be al destroyed by Robin and his company, ran away, tyl the kyng discovered him selfe, and comforted them, and then ech one was fayne. Then was a great feast for al people; and Sir Richard Lee had his lady restored, for which Robin gave the kyng humble thanks. Then Robin dwelt in the court a yeare, tyl with lavish spending, he had nothing left to mayntayn him selfe and his men, and thereof. all were departed from him but Little John and Scarlocke; and, on a tyme, seing youngsters shooting, it come to his mynd howe he was alienated from that exercise, for which he was very greyued, and cast in his mynd howe to get away; wherfore he devysed to tell the kyng howe he had erected a chapel, in Barnsdale, of Mary Magdalen, and bene sore troubled in dreaming about it, and therefore crayed liberty to go a pilgrymage thither barefoot. So the kyng gaue him a week respit for goyng and coming; but Robin being come thyther, assembled his awld trayne, and never returned backe to the court. After which tyme he contynued that course of lyfe about xx years, tyl, distempered with could and age, he had great payne in his lymes, his bloud being corrupted; therefore, to be eased of his payne, by letting blud, he repayred to the priores of Kyrkesley, which some say was his aunt, a woman very skylful in physique and surgery; who, perceyving him to be Robin Hood, and wayin'g howe fel an enemy he was to religious persons, toke reveng of him for her owne howse, and al others, by let-

ting him bleed to death; and she buryed him vnder a greate stone, by the hy waye's syde. It is also sayd, that one Sir Roger of Doncastre, bearing grudge to Robin for some injury, incyted the prioress, with whom he was very familiar, in such manner to dispatch him, and then al his company was soone dispersed. The place of Little John's buryal is to this the celebro. for the yeelding of excellent whetstones.

FINIS.

NOTES.

Preface, p. 35.—London in the olden time,—*Troynouvant.* This name, as applicable to London in the olden time, is derived, no doubt, from *Troja Nova*, or New Troy, a name given to London in various city pageants, and originating from the once popular fable of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who declared, that Brute, a lineal descendant of Æneas, "the grandson of Jupiter by his daughter Venus, builded this city about the year of the world 2888," (or 1008 years before the nativity of Christ), and named it "Troy-novant," or "Trinovantum." This tale, "although it be not of sufficient force to draw the gayne-sayers," was once esteemed of such validity by the citizens, as to be transcribed into their "Liber Albus," and hence into the "Recordatorium Civitatis Speculum"; and so high was its credit, that in a memorial presented to Henry VI, and now preserved among the records in the Tower, it is advanced as evidence of "great antiquity," precedency, and dignity of the city of London even before Rome."—*Brayley's Londiniana*, vol. i. p. 2.

Caxton, also, in his Chronycles of England, states, that after the arrival and conquest by Brute, he called the country Britain, after his own name, and in remembrance of Troy, from

whence he came, styling the first city he founded here, New Troy. See also "Hone's Ancient Mysteries"; the "Guildhall Giants," p. 274-276.

In the tragedy of "Locrine," once attributed to Shakspere, the same story of Brute is detailed, and "stately Troynouvant" mentioned as the principal city, and the burial-place of Brute, or Brutus.

The Editor had prepared a Glossary of the obsolete words in the Legend of the Lytell Geste, before he received from his friend, the Rev. John Eagles, the modern version thereof, which so fully discloses their meaning, or at any rate, interprets the spirit of the original, that he thought its insertion unnecessary. He cannot, however, omit a reference to the obvious meaning of the word "Sayles," twice used in the first fytte of the legend, which Mr. Ritson says, in a note, and it is repeated in all subsequent editions, "the Sales appears to be some place in the neighbourhood of Barnsdale, but no mention of it has elsewhere occurred, though it is believed there is a field so called, not far from Doncaster." Now the word, no doubt, is used in allusion to the "sally tree," or "sallies," as the husbandmen in the counties of Worcester and Hereford are accustomed to call them, where a species of "sally," or dwarf willow, luxuriantly grows.

The following short Glossary refers to obsolete words in the "Song against the King of Almaigne, p. 373":—*Almaigne*, Germany; *leaute*, legality; *pees*, peace; *thoh*, though; *trichard*, treacherous; *trichen*, trick, deceive; *scopying*, whoring; *o' ferlyng*, one furlong; *habbe as he brewe*, have as he brews; *bale to dryng*, evil to drink; *seised*, seized; *maline*, mill; *mangonel*, an engine used for discharging stones, before the invention of gunpowder; *muchele bast*, mickle boast, great boast; *y borne henne*, borne hence; *yn*, inn; *gyn*, engine, contrivance; *cop*,

hea.; *scot*, tax; *fot pot*,—Mr. Wright construes this to mean, tramp on his feet; *leuf*, *loht*, be it agreeable, or disagreeable; *lyard*, grey, a name given to a horse from its grey colour, as *bayard*, from bay; *shreward*, shrew; *emes*, kinsman, uncle; *lore*, teaching.

END OF VOL. I.

RICHARDS, PRINTER, 100, ST. MARTIN'S LANE.

00044794

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 13 February, 2016